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ABSTRACT

This student's manual that features content needed to do tasks related to visual merchandising is intended for students in co-op training stations and entry-level, master employee, and supervisory-level employees. It contains 13 assignments. Each assignment has questions covering specific information and also features activities in which students visit specific stores and observe current practices. Each assignment consists of objectives, terms to know, informational material, assignment questions, and list of projects. Topics include the following: visual merchandising: what they see is what they buy; skills and knowledge needed; safety and security; developing display themes; visual merchandising for self-selection; fixturing; elements of window display; point-of-sale merchandising; effective use of lighting; effective use of mannequins; merchandise signing; effective use of display properties and decorations; and display planning, design, and coordination. A companion answer book/teacher's guide provides the following: information on use for independent study and classroom instruction, list of assignments and their objectives, list of related essential elements for specific marketing education courses, list of tasks done on the job related to visual merchandising, list of key competencies based on foundations of marketing and functions of marketing in the National Curriculum Framework, information on Distributive Education Clubs of America competition and publications, sample training plan, and answer key. (YLB)

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BASIC VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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Basic Visual Merchandising

Second Edition

By

Robert R. Luter

Revised by

Jim Cockrum and Mary Summerall

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Foreword

Basic Visual Merchandising has been revised from a highly successful earlier book to become part of the new EIMC series of publications on marketing functions a student might learn or observe on a job. It has been shortened from the earlier version, which included visual merchandising tips for many different types of stores. The skills and knowledge involved are for the most part generalizable, and the new book can fit more conveniently into courses that are already crowded with content. Because this manual is concise, it can be completely covered, yet leave you time to study periodicals and other industry publications. This is desirable because many of the best examples of good visual merchandising can only be shown in high-quality, four-color photographs.

Since the first book was written, there have been many changes in how stores organize their visual merchandising effort. Displays are more likely to be designed and constructed elsewhere, with the store employee simply erecting them on-site. Also, stores today often do not change their basic look very often, striving instead for an image of permanent virtues of one kind or another. Some people say there is less opportunity today for a high-level career in designing and constructing displays. Certainly, the student may need to work harder to find out where such careers exist and how to qualify for them.

Basic Visual Merchandising will introduce you to information and thought processes that are needed by persons who are moving up the ladder in a marketing career. By answering the questions at the end of each assignment, and by doing selected activities, you will begin to get a clearer idea of what is done and why it is done. The projects can be quite time-consuming, so you need to be selective and use those which are most directly valuable to you at this time. They are designed so that you do not have to be currently employed in marketing, but can gain information by research, observation, and discussion with marketing employees. In doing the projects you will develop a variety of the higher level thinking skills that are now recognized as being necessary to success in marketing.

Mary Summerall revised chapters 6, 9, and 10, after consulting with several currently active visual merchandising designers. Of particular help was Tommy Karl, a freelance visual consultant in Austin, Texas. Also helpful was Dennis Nauert, visual merchandising manager at the Highland Mall store of J.C. Penney Co., Inc. Austin. Some other revision was done in other chapters, but even with the changes, the publication is still basically the work of Robert R. Luter, former coordinator for the Instructional Materials Center.

Jim Cockrum
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Credit is also due for this publication—as for other EIMC materials—to the Project Advisory Committee as a whole, which met twice and provided other contributions through the year. The PAC members also included Janie Anaya, McAllen Memorial High School; Betty Helton, McCallum High School, Austin; Sheree Davis, Highland Park, Dallas; Dr. Jerry Moorman, College of Education, University of North Texas; Dr. Marcella McComas Norwood, College of Technology, University of Houston; and Adam Gonzales, business representative, owner-manager of Serrano's restaurants, Austin.

Also participating with the group were Berry Sullivan and Ward McCain, of the Marketing Education staff at the Texas Education Agency, and Dr. Barbara Selke-Kern, director of Educational Resources at EIMC.

A number of ideas and recommendations came from a meeting of the Marketing Education Curriculum Advisory Task Force in San Antonio on August 7, 1990. In addition to the teachers and teacher educator members of PAC, members of MECATF included Art Tidwell, San Benito High School; Larry Russell, Clear Creek High School; Brenda Simmons, Dayton High School; Suzanne Faught, Lampasas High School; Nelda Shipp, Mineola High School; Adell Morton, Allen High School; Chris Huffman, Brady High School; and Sandra Telles, Coronado High School, El Paso.

Visual Merchandising: What They See Is What They Buy

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. give the goals of promotion;
2. explain what visual merchandising is and how it fits into the promotion picture;
3. discuss the other activities of promotion and how each contributes to a successful promotion mix;
4. give three objectives of visual merchandising;
5. discuss two basic ways merchandise can be presented; and
6. tell how various jobs in marketing are related to visual merchandising.

Terms to Know

display—the art of arranging and designing several elements and items of merchandise into a pleasing, attractive presentation. Display uses props, fixtures, lighting, signing, and decoration. It uses animation or movement, themes, color, pattern, and flair for the unusual to attract attention and create desire for ownership of the merchandise.

visual merchandising—a broader concept that includes more than display. It is the total visual impact of merchandise presentation. It begins outside the store and continues inside with store design, decoration, layout, fixtures, lighting, signing, and displays. It is the total look and atmosphere of the store itself. It must create customer desire and the excitement of shopping and buying.

Visual merchandising is one of the activities of the promotion

function of marketing, which has as its goals attracting potential customers to a business and causing them to buy its goods, services, or ideas. In a way, promotion is the function that makes all the other functions of marketing bear fruit. Without promotion the crucial act of buying would not take place.

Other activities of promotion include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling. Most often they are carried out together in ways that make them most effective. The various activities all have an impact on attracting customers and selling merchandise, and usually how they are to be done is determined by planning what is known as the **promotional mix**. The mix will include the various activities in ways designed to be the most effective.

Advertising is carried out by messages (ads) which the store pays the media to carry. Advertising may be directed at selling specific merchandise, at getting people to come to the store,

or at building a specific image for the store. Advertising is often done by specialists working with other specialists.

Public relations attempts to influence the attitude of the public toward a store without paying the media to run information. The messages of public relations are more likely to be toward building the image of the store than selling specific merchandise. Public relations may be the responsibility of management or a staff specialist, but it is also influenced heavily by what all employees do. A good public image has to be deserved.

Sales promotion generally refers to other nonpersonal activities in promotion, such as special events, offers of rebates after purchase, and various games. Sales promotion has become extremely important in the last decade, and it now has its own specialists and publications, apart from advertising.

Personal selling is the crowning step in the promotion function, the activity in which efforts of a



Visual merchandising today uses "cues" that attract customers to merchandise. Varied mannequin types help set the mood or image for each department. Related merchandise is often shown together. (Courtesy of J.C. Penney, Highland Mall)



sales associate pay off for the store. A personal who sells should keep track of what is being done in other promotional activities, because they can influence selling success.

Visual merchandising is the most three-dimensional and visually exciting of the activities of promotion. It deals directly with the exterior and the interior of a store, since what people see influences what and how much they buy. Hundreds of thousands of store employees and millions of customers have experienced the impact that good visual merchandising can have.

Visual merchandising is also related to store design—the external architecture and the interior decoration of a store. Visual merchandising and store design are so closely linked that the name of a principal magazine for this area of marketing is *Visual Merchandising and Store Design*.

Store design will usually try to create a certain image. A store stressing price may have a simple outside and a warehouselike inside, projecting an image of management that is cutting expenses to the bone to save money. On the other hand, elegance may be the image a store or a shopping center uses to lure customers to come in and shop. Some stores will seek an image of long-term elegance and solidity, while others are as futuristic as they can get. Edinburgh, Scotland, is famous for its historical sights, yet when a new music "mega" store was built there, both its exterior and interior were like something from the next century.

Although they are so closely related, store design and visual merchandising differ in this way: store design is more likely to be long-range. The store wants to maintain a certain image over months and years. It may want everything about its design to say "we sell quality merchandise," for example. Visual merchandising activities are much more time-

sensitive, with messages like "this is the top-quality dress you should buy for the fall season—today if possible." Naturally, visual merchandising doesn't use dull wordy sentences like that. The visual merchandiser has much more exciting ways to get across her or his message. A person studying visual merchandising will soon find that words can give a structure and approach to doing the study, but real understanding will result from analyzing illustrations in this manual and actual visual merchandising in stores.

Visual Merchandising Objectives

Visual merchandising can do three things: (1) It can attract people to the store. (2) It can present merchandise in ways that make people want to buy. (3) It can help build or maintain the image of the store. All three are important, and all three are often accomplished at the same time.

Visual merchandising that attracts people to a store is usually the most dramatic example of what can be done visually. Probably the most outstanding examples of what can be done to attract people occur at the Christmas season, when many stores realize that their annual success can depend on the traffic they get in just a few weeks. This is true both for downtown stores that open onto a street and for the stores in shopping malls.

The March 1991 issue of *Visual Merchandising and Store Design* devoted 18 pages to color photographs and information on what specific Christmas displays accomplished and how they were made. Credits were given to everyone from visual design teams to companies that supplied individual mannequins. (Major visual merchandising efforts today are likely to require numerous experts.) Here are just a few of the examples they covered.

In 1990, at Woodward's, in Vancouver, Canada, display windows featured outdoor forest scenes complete with elves, dwarfs, and giant red toadstools.

In New York City, at Tiffany's, the 15th-century religious paintings of Flemish painter Jan van Eyck were depicted with three-dimensional statues and dramatic lighting. This reinforced an image of being highly cultured.

At Jordan Marsh in Boston, an animated child-size Enchanted Village was built on the sixth floor. The street-level display windows also had animated Christmas scenes to attract customers. On their way to the sixth floor, customers could enjoy music and refreshments offered at carts, and perhaps even select something to buy.

Meanwhile, back in Cincinnati, Loth Office Environments used a dramatic Christmas display of the "World's Largest Office Chair Party" to meet another objective of visual merchandising—to present merchandise. Tinsel and other features of Christmas frivolity decorated a room full of office chairs.

Those high-level examples, possibly the Olympics of visual merchandising, were doing what Christmas displays all the over the world do each year—bring in customers by the millions.

Presenting Merchandise

Presenting merchandise is every bit as important as attracting customers. Attracting customers and presenting merchandise are like legs on a stool that also requires maintaining store image.

Presenting merchandise often also attracts customers to the store. Large outside display windows are used to dramatize merchandise and lure people inside. At the other extreme, stores may simply have large glass windows in front, through which potential customers can glimpse an endless variety of things to purchase.

Merchandise can be presented in two ways. It can be set apart, by placing it in **displays**. Or it can be placed on special furniture, racks, and other devices called **fixtures** to make it easy to see, handle, and inspect.

Displays may be placed in windows with backs, or half-backs. Merchandise can also be displayed on platforms, on walls, or even hanging from ceilings. Displays can focus on merchandise that is especially desirable, or new, or related to something else the store has to sell. Displays can also mark where departments are, and if carefully placed can cause customer traffic to flow through a store past other merchandise. As is obvious, there is much to be kept in mind when deciding what to display and how best to display it. Later assignments will cover the many aspects of display.

Although displays are more prominent, the many kinds of fixtures that present merchandise at its best are also vital to selling. Customers need to see, touch, and sometimes even taste and smell merchandise. Employees should know the names and purposes of many kinds of fixtures if they are to present the merchandise most effectively. Useful information on fixtures is also provided in later assignments.

A special type of display called a **point-of-purchase** or **point-of-sale** display is kind of a cross between a fixture and a display. It normally carries enough merchandise so it acts as a fixture from which merchandise can be selected directly. But the P.O.P. display may also have advertising messages and design features that make it every bit as attractive to the customer's eye as larger displays in the store. An entire industry has grown up to produce such displays by the thousands, making them readily available across the country. They are usually made for manufacturers, who then make them available to stores both to move merchandise

and to deliver advertising messages.

Point-of-purchase displays can blend artistic impact with a clear message to provide a convenient but inexpensive way to sell merchandise. Figure 1 shows a winner of a 1990 Outstanding Merchandising Achievement Gold award from the Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute, of Englewood, New Jersey. The display emphasized the idea of Hershey as the "Great American Chocolate Bar," with both its graphics and the authentic looking 1912 wrappers on the bars. The Willamette Industries' Display Division at Bellmawr, New Jersey, did the display for Hershey Chocolate U.S.A., Hershey, Pennsylvania. Some 95,000 of the units were produced, and it had an "excellent" sales life.

Maintaining Store Image

In addition to attraction and presentation, both displays and fixtures can help maintain store image. An expensive jewelry store may show its rings and merchandise in cases of polished wood of fine furniture quality. Large discount stores may content themselves with metal racks holding boxed merchandise stacked 10 or more feet high.

Displays differ in the space, time, talent, and money invested in them. In the Christmas season of 1990, the Emporium in San Francisco invested in a rooftop carnival complete with rides. A small store in a small town may use ingenuity in ways that will attract the eye and cause people to talk about its efforts. Human creativity and determination are the bases of good visual merchandising.

Yet another aspect of store image is that of producing displays and maintaining fixtures so that they are clean, neat, wellmade, and show the store's concern for doing things right. Poor construc-

tion and upkeep can overshadow creativity and good intentions.

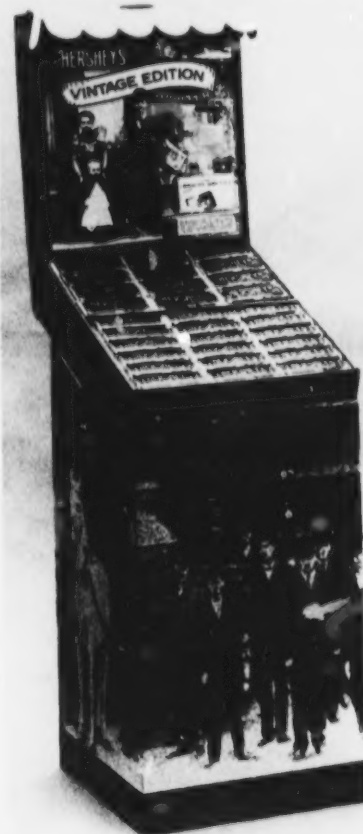


Figure 1. A prize-winning P.O.P. display that also sells Hershey bars

Using Thinking Skills

Visual merchandising requires a wide range of thinking skills, from the possession of large amounts of specific knowledge to the ability to evaluate a finished display and decide if it is worth producing by the thousands. The skills involved include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The person doing visual merchandising also has to be able to draw from and use a supply of information on how people react to certain things, as well as keep constantly in touch with merchandise and merchandising.

Knowledge involved can include such things as the names of the types of fixtures and mannequins,

instant recall of all the safety rules, and information about where displays can be placed to get the best traffic through a department.

A person who has **comprehension** of those facts will also be safer, more helpful in selecting fixtures, and more likely to know where to place a display. The ability to restate a rule or fact in your own words is evidence of comprehension. To put it another way, you have to be able to say it your way.

All the facts covered in this manual become useful when they are **applied**. For example, knowing and comprehending the elements of design is only the first step in a process that leads to actually applying those elements to a real display in a store—or in a sketch. Also, a person using precautions when setting up a display is applying the information on safety.

A visual merchandiser also needs to look at all the factors affecting display and **analyze** how they relate. Selecting the right colors won't work unless the lighting is also carefully selected. Displays often include items that are related to the main item, and the merchandiser has to analyze use situations when planning what to include. For example, jogging watches might be placed in a display of running shoes, which also includes books on running.

In **synthesis**, the merchandiser puts together elements and parts to form a whole that is new. This is done when the display is actually constructed. Over and over again the visual merchandiser must come up with fresh, new displays using the same basic rules and recommendations. An example of this level of thinking is the way that merchandisers often tie various other promotional activities, such as advertising, into what is being done with displays. It is often necessary to know and show clear relationships between advertising, point-of-purchase,

window displays, styles, and even employee training.

Finally, **evaluation** is necessary. The visual merchandiser first has to look at the final display, or arrangement of fixtures, to decide if they really will be effective. Then they have to be observed in action, watching to see how customers respond to them—whether they stop to inspect the merchandise, or take some type of buying-related action. It is possible to look at sales data to determine if displays were effective. Sales associates can help the display person by reporting whether or the display attracted interest and increased traffic.

The WHO of Visual Merchandising

A variety of employees have some responsibility for visual merchandising in stores. Much of it can be done by persons who aren't specialists. Sales associates and stockers are likely to place merchandise on fixtures, and maintain those fixtures. How fixtures and displays are arranged in a department may be determined by sales associates in the department, by store management or supervisory personnel, or even by plans coming from the central office.

Simpler displays may be designed and set up by various employees. The many large chains of stores often design their displays at a central point and deliver them to local stores in boxes to be set up. Point-of-purchase displays are often manufactured and delivered for setup to thousands of stores.

People who design and build displays from the floor up may become relatively less common as more stores depend on ready-to-set-up displays. Opportunities to design and do creative work occur now at the very top of merchandising—in prominent stores such as those described earlier—or in the smallest stores which must

operate from a limited budget and using considerable imagination, talent, and effort. For these reasons, any planning for careers strictly in visual merchandising needs to be carefully evaluated. Even so, other employees with titles that include top management need to have a sound understanding of visual merchandising, such as can be obtained from this manual.

Questions

1. What are the two goals of promotion?
2. What are the five types of activities in promotion?
3. What is the name for the plan that describes how the various activities of promotion are to be used together?
4. What are three objectives of visual merchandising?
5. What are the two basic ways that merchandise can be presented?
6. What type of display is a cross between a display and a fixture?
7. What thinking skills are involved in visual merchandising?
8. What types of employees may be involved in visual merchandising?
9. Why is it important to check carefully when anticipating a career specializing in the design and construction of displays?

Projects

1. Select two retail stores that mostly sell merchandise (rather than services) and have a variety of merchandise to show. Good choices are department stores, florists, jewelry stores, shoe stores, discount stores, apparel stores, furniture stores, and appliance stores. From observing their exteriors and interiors, report what image you think each is trying to present, and what it is doing to

reinforce that image. Compare the two stores. If they are seeking the same image, tell how they differ in what they do to achieve it. If they are seeking different images, tell what they do to achieve their individual goals.

2. For each store, select two or more window displays or other

major displays, and report on how they are designed to meet the objectives of attracting customers, presenting merchandise, and building store image.

3. For each store, report on two or more fixtures it uses with specific types of merchandise, explaining how they meet the

objectives of attracting customers, presenting information, and building store image.

4. For each store, select two or more point-of-purchase displays, and report on how they are designed to meet the objectives of attracting customers, presenting information, and building store image.

2

Skills and Knowledge Needed in Visual Merchandising

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. describe the duties and responsibilities of a display worker;
2. list the skills that a display worker needs to be proficient;
3. briefly describe the duties and responsibilities of a display manager; and
4. name at least two related jobs that have display or visual merchandising responsibilities.

Terms to Know

complexity (kom PLEX ih tee)—degree of difficulty; made up of many parts or complicated by design.

ensemble (AHN SOM bul)—several items of clothing that make up a complete, coordinated outfit, such as skirt, jacket, blouse, shoes, and handbag that go well together.

fabrication (FAB rih KAY shun)—the art of constructing a display prop by fitting together several parts and pieces into a whole unit. This may include finishing with either paint, paper, fabric, or other decorative material.

mannequin (MAN ih kun)—sometimes spelled "manikin," a complete human figure or form on which clothing is displayed. Most of these have removable heads, arms, and hands. The torso is usually made to be removed at the waistline. Mannequins are made in both male and female

forms. They come in various sizes—adult, junior, and child. There are also half- and three-quarter-sized mannequins.

requisition (REK quih ZIH shun)—a written request for specific work to be done. In display or visual merchandising, it is a request for a specific display to be installed, naming the location or department and the merchandise to be used.

showcase—a merchandise unit that is built to counterheight and is glassed in on the front and both sides. The merchandise can be seen easily by the customer.

sign press (SIN press)—a mechanical printing press that has movable typefaces and a platen, or roller, for imprinting a message on paper card stock. Usually a sign is of a standard size that fits a sign holder or frame. It contains the necessary information about the garment or merchandise on display.

silk screen—a form of printing signs and posters. The design is cut as a stencil to which a piece of silk is attached to act as a fine-mesh screen. Stencil paint is then rolled over the surface of the silk screen making a smooth, even pattern on the card stock.

subcontract (SUB KON tract)—to hire a portion of work done so that a job can be completed. In some decorating work, one person or company contracts to do a complete job. However, portions of that job require special skills which are then subcontracted to other persons or specialists. Subcontracted jobs can be plumbing, electrical, painting, floor covering, murals, wall hangings, ceiling fixtures, furnishings, and others.

two-dimensional (TOO die MEN shu nul)—refers to a drawing or plan that shows only two dimensions, length and width. Three-dimensional drawings add the depth of a

plan, as the eye would see an object.

Beginning Jobs in Visual Merchandising

Your duties in visual merchandising will vary with the kind of store in which you are employed, and its size. In large stores, visual merchandisers have full-time job duties directed entirely to this area of store operation. In small stores, visual merchandising may be only a part-time responsibility.

Job Titles

Few retailers have changed job titles over the years, even though the duties and responsibilities have changed. Most places still have job titles such as these: display worker (display person), window trimmer, window decorator, store decorator, model dresser, merchandise displayer, showcase trimmer, or other similar names. Almost all of these have the same duties and responsibilities, depending upon the kind of store and its size of operation.

Job Description

Generally, display workers—

1. Design and install displays of selected merchandise in various areas of the store, windows, showcases, wall units, and departments;

2. Follow recommended designs and locations as given by the display manager, merchandise manager, or department head, and use the selected merchandise in the display;

3. Assemble, dress, and group mannequins for effective display of fashion goods and accessories; disassemble, undress, and store mannequins when not in use;

4. Construct, paint, cover, and arrange display props where these are made in the store shop, using the recommended tools and materials for these units;

5. Make effective arrangements and groupings of merchandise that follow a specific theme or promotional tie-in event;

6. Assemble and arrange fixtures following a preselected plan, including displays and signing; disassemble and store these same fixtures when not in use;

7. Construct, assemble, and install point-of-purchase or point-of-sale display units;

8. Request signs and appropriate copy material and artwork from the sign shop; or prepare signs and copy to accompany displays;

9. Stock and store all display properties, mannequins, and materials in the proper place when not in use; maintain properties and equipment; request needed repairs or replacements on outdated or unserviceable properties and materials; and

10. Clean and maintain all display areas, including windows, and showcase interiors, using cleaning equipment; replace burned-out spot and floodlights; keep displays clean when in use.

Major Duties

The following is a breakdown of the major duties of a display worker in a department store. In other types of retail stores, the duties will be similar in nature, but will vary according to the merchandise and size of store. These are compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor.

1. *Planning displays (20 percent of time).* The worker refers to the display schedule, or to the requisition received from the merchandise department. He or she determines the type of display needed, the nature of the merchandise to be displayed, and the physical location of the site of the display. The worker originates his or her own design or follows suggestions and plans given by the display manager. The worker confers with the department head, display manager, or merchandise

manager to select appropriate merchandise, have it properly prepared for display, and make certain it will be available for sale when displayed.

2. *Assembly of display materials (30 percent of time):* The worker goes to the display storeroom or warehouse to select appropriate props and decorative materials used in display. He or she transports or has these sent to the workshop or display location. If special display props must be built, these are requested from the carpenter shop (or built by a display worker if a shop carpenter is not available). Forms and props are covered with selected materials. These are fabrics, paper, plastics, or special artwork posters. Pins, tacks, nails, and staples are used. Sometimes props are painted, using either spray equipment or fast-drying paints with brushes. The worker requests appropriate copy and sign work from the sign shop (or printed by the display worker when needed). He or she selects appropriate accessories or background props to accompany the display. Some props are finished in the display shop before transporting to the display site.

3. *Sets up displays (30 percent of time):* The worker lays out and assembles display elements according to a plan, sketch, or blueprint. Mannequins are assembled with correctly fitted garments. Then the garments are pinned so that the fit is adjusted to the mannequin. Mannequins are secured to assure they will remain stable and in an upright position. The worker makes certain mannequins are properly grouped when more than one is used, and places them in a secure, safe area. He or she arranges merchandise on props in the most effective manner. Signs and artwork are placed where needed. The worker positions flood and spotlights in the proper manner. He or she gets assistance from store carpenters, electricians, and the alterations shop where necessary on difficult displays.

4. *Related duties (20 percent of time):* The worker cleans and maintains all display locations, replaces lights when needed, vacuums, and dusts as needed. He or she disassembles displays, returns merchandise to appropriate departments, and stores props, mannequins, and other elements. He or she assists in setting up fixtures to rearrange departments, including assembly, locating, signing, and other needed elements. The worker helps plan special events and promotions, including tie-in advertising, theme banners and artwork, and other appropriate materials. He or she sets up and places point-of-sale (POS) displays for selected merchandise, including manufacturer's materials and merchandising aids. The worker assists in devising and installing decorations and signing at public relations events. This is done in cooperation with the public relations department and advertising or promotion personnel.

The displays vary greatly in size and complexity of design. The worker is usually assigned one or more floors in a store, or a set number of departments. For example, one display worker may have all hard line merchandise and another all soft line merchandise. Or one display worker may be assigned to all fashion merchandise. Display workers are responsible for the maintenance of display sites such as windows, showcases, ledges, wall- and floor-mounted units, special merchandise areas within a department, or top-mounted displays over fixtures.

In visual merchandising, display workers' duties are to help set up special "shops" within departments that sell selected groups of merchandise. An example is a "Campus Store" that features schoolwear, wardrobes, and accessories for the young student. These are seasonal or semipermanent in nature. They may change two to three times during the year. Trimming, decorating, displays,

and fixturing are all part of these duties.

Skills and Knowledge Needed

The purely artistic demands for a display worker are not as necessary now as they once were. Art and lettering skills were once required. In some cases, they may still be an asset in certain kinds of stores. In addition, most display workers had to construct, paint, trim their own props, and collect various display elements from nature and decorate them.

The major skills demanded of most display workers today are these:

1. Artistic ability in designing and planning a display unit, following a theme or layout. Usually such plans are two-dimensional sketches on paper, or they may consist of a blueprint or floor plan layout.

2. Ability to arrange display elements in a pleasing, tasteful manner so that the merchandise being displayed is the dominant theme. Know how to simplify a display so that it is not overworked or overdecorated.

3. Excellent color knowledge and coordination. Must know color harmony, contrasts, pattern coordination, and coordination of accessories to either contrast or harmonize with merchandise being displayed. Must know how to select proper color spotlights to key display. For example, a red spot on a green ensemble would turn it gray or neutralize the color, washing out its effectiveness.

4. Ability to fit garments on mannequins and forms, making sure that the garments displayed are free of wrinkles, sags, and puckers. Must know how to pin a garment in the back for fit. Must know how to use wires, wood, paper, foam rubber, or Styrofoam. These are used to give special effects to a garment on display, such as a billowing skirt in a March

wind, or a scarf flowing backward on a cycle rider or boater.

5. Must know how to mount, suspend, and secure various display properties so they will support the weight of the merchandise and be free of safety hazards. Must make sure mannequins are securely assembled and mounted on support bases.

6. Ability to construct display props when necessary, select appropriate covering materials, and secure these to the props with a hammer or stapler, using nails, tacks, pins, staples, and other fasteners. Must be able to paint props with spray or brush-on paints, selecting or mixing the right colors and achieving highlights or decorative effects.

7. Must be able to request proper signing for a display, including needed artwork or posters. In some cases, the worker must be able to either set up a sign on a sign press machine, or must be able to letter a sign freehand, using inks, pens, tempera paints, and sign brushes.

8. Must be able to use simple hand tools such as the handsaw, coping saw, hammers, pliers, screwdrivers, and various types of fasteners in the construction of display props, fixtures, and manufacturer's POS display units. In some cases, the display worker must be able to use power tools in the shop for the same purpose. Must be able to follow a blueprint or floor plan in setting up fixtures. Must use the appropriate hand tools for assembly and disassembly.

Working Conditions

Much of a display worker's time is spent inside the store. However, the physical activities required are often strenuous. Climbing on ladders, stooping, bending, lifting, and reaching into difficult places are often required. Working inside windows is very confining, and one can easily fall into or through a glass window. The space inside closed-back windows with lights

on gets very warm. There is little or no air circulation, and the space between the window and wall is usually small. In most cases, you will be working in confined spaces. So you must be careful not to knock over mannequins, props, or stepladders.

In addition to working inside confined spaces, you must also be particular about cleaning and housekeeping chores. Even when a window is closed, dust accumulates, insects are attracted by the lights, and insect webs form in the corners. Each time a window display is changed, the floor, back-drop, and side walls need a thorough vacuuming, cleaning, and dusting. Interior and POS displays also need constant cleaning and dusting. Mannequins accumulate dust, show fingerprints, and need surface cleansing quite often. Maintaining displays is an everyday chore that goes with the job.

Changing fixturing and special shops requires a knowledge of the fixturing system, how to install and dismantle fixture units, and the use of simple hand tools. Such work is often done in small spaces. You must be careful not to block aisles or have parts placed so that they become a hazard to customers or employees.

When mannequins and display props are stored, you must handle, lift, stand, and transport them back and forth. Most full-length, adult-sized mannequins are heavy. These require great care in transporting, storing, and assembling. Your work will also include dressing, pinning, taping, wiring, and ironing or pressing garments for display.

The display shop is usually equipped with both power tools and hand tools. Some display workers are expected to be proficient in the use of all types of tools, including paint spraying. Props must be covered with either paper or fabrics. This requires skill in pattern cutting, fitting, and fastening. You usually have worktables, and the work itself is often

dirty. The sign press and inks require skillful use and constant maintenance to keep the work area clean and free of hazards. Display construction itself is messy. But the props and mannequins must be kept clean, spotless, and free of fingerprints and smudges. Frequent washing of hands is necessary, as well as the use of clean cloths for handling and storing.

In a few stores, fixture glass is still used on countertops and in fixture systems. Handling and cutting glass is hazardous and must be done with care. Raw-cut edges are very dangerous. They are likely to have tiny glass splinters or nicks that can easily cut the skin. Where display glass is still used, you should know how to score and cut the glass. You should also know how to treat the cut edges so they will not harm customers or employees.

Last, display workers must be available during the normal workday for other employees. A harmonious and cooperative working relationship between display workers, fellow employees, department heads, merchandise and sales promotion managers, and operations managers is very important. You must often stop one job in progress in order to take care of another request. You should know how to take merchandise from a display or inside a window and replace it with other merchandise. Sometimes this means disassembly of a mannequin and reassembly with another garment or ensemble.

Advanced and Related Jobs

Display Manager

Most display managers are promoted from the ranks of the display workers. The manager must know the entire range of visual merchandising duties and responsibilities. So it is unlikely that such persons would be in a management job without the necessary knowledge and skills.

The display or visual merchandising manager has these major job duties:

1. plans, directs, and coordinates the design, fabrication, installation, and removal of displays;
2. plans, directs, and coordinates the assembly and disassembly of fixtures and special, short-term minidepartments or shops within departments;
3. attends planning conferences with merchandise managers and sales promotion managers to coordinate visual merchandising work with special events;
4. originates and prepares sketches of proposed displays, show cards, signs, and related items;
5. oversees and directs the work of the display shop and sign shop, including those that have full-time specialists and crafts persons assigned to those shops;
6. prepares adequate storage space for all display properties, including the materials storage for fabrication and construction;
7. prepares visual merchandising budgets, plans purchases of needed supplies and equipment, and monitors expenses to assure that they are within budgeted amounts;
8. oversees and coordinates the assembly of special promotional displays for civic events, public relations events, and out-of-store events where assigned;
9. contacts manufacturers and suppliers to gather all types of POS display units, makes certain these are used as needed in the various departments, and ties these in with advertising and promotional campaigns; and
10. hires and trains display workers and maintains sufficient staff to handle the visual merchandising needs of the store and its branch units when necessary. Supervising, planning, directing, and staffing take the greatest amount of time.

Wholesale Field Merchandiser

While most of the display and visual merchandising jobs are in retailing, they also take place in wholesaling. The wholesaler in many cases is expected to offer a wide variety of merchandise support services. Salespeople, jobbers, agents, manufacturers and their representatives have some visual merchandising responsibilities as a normal part of their job. This is especially true in many food product lines including baby foods, spices, boxed baked goods such as crackers and cookies, confectionary products, and many other specialty products.

The wholesale field merchandiser has these major visual merchandising duties:

1. installs and maintains fixtures within the retail unit, according to plans and wishes of the retailer. Makes routine inspection, dusts, cleans, and makes certain that proper signing and price tags are installed;
2. inventories, replaces stock, rotates merchandise for freshness control, marks prices on individual units, places reserve stock in storeroom, and makes count of units actually brought into the store;
3. writes orders for retailers, noting number of units placed in the fixtures, plus number left on reserve. Where old merchandise is picked up, field representative notes credit on sales invoice;
4. where sales and profits are not up to expected standards, representative requests permission to reposition fixtures or alter the location. Representative does disassembly and moving of fixtures and restocking, plus additional changes in signing and POS equipment. Representative will also make changes when requested by store owner or manager; and
5. where the manufacturer supplies POS displays and signing material, representative requests store management to allow these temporary installations and additional merchandise stocks.

Commercial Decorator/Designer

Although more limited opportunities exist, some companies hire commercial decorators and designers. These people generally go into business for themselves or contract their services to commercial companies.

Considered professionals with both talent and experience, commercial decorators or designers do the following:

1. plan and design interiors for hotels, public transportation, commercial and institutional buildings of all types, office buildings, and professional offices;
2. devise harmonious color schemes for walls, floors, ceilings, and furnishing, including pictures, painted murals, wall hangings, and interior displays of all types;
3. design and install special equipment, fixtures, furniture, lighting, and exhibits; and
4. subcontract much of the actual installations and construction, but can design and do some artistic work when professional talent is not available.

Display and Banner Designer

This is another highly specialized occupation in the professional category. Work can be found with commercial companies that specialize in outdoor decorations, and with outdoor advertising companies. Some of these professionals contract for their services. Like commercial decorators and designers, these people are both talented and experienced in the design and creative decoration areas. They do the following:

1. design artistic effects for all types of outdoor displays and exhibits, such as street decorations, fairs, rodeos, centennials, trade exhibits and shows, and building decorations;
2. design, construct, and fabricate special emblems, symbols, logos, and other artistic effects, including banners and signs. Services usually include installation and removal afterwards; and

3. contract for installation, assembly, and decoration of booths and commercial exhibits at trade shows and conventions in hotels, convention centers, and public exhibit buildings.

Display Artist

Experience gained through normal display work can lead workers into becoming professional display artists. These workers are talented and adept in sign making, show card lettering, and poster development. They either go into business for themselves or are employed by sign companies and commercial decorating firms.

These workers design and prepare artwork, such as posters, signs, banners, menus for hotels and restaurants, convention programs, themes, and similar materials. They create designs and plans, make layouts, paint and letter signs and banners, and do illustrations, using a wide variety of paints and materials. They work with airbrush as well as brushes and pens in rendering original works. Silk screening is also used on many signs, posters, and banners.

Questions

1. List 10 general duties of a *display worker*.
2. Describe what is done in planning a display.
3. What duties are involved in assembling display materials?
4. What are the major duties in setting up a display?
5. What related visual merchandising duties does the display worker have?
6. Name the major kinds of special skills that a display worker should have or develop.
7. What are some of the strenuous physical activities of and dangers to a display worker?
8. Briefly describe the major duties of a *display manager*.
9. Name some other jobs that either require display abilities or are directly involved in display.

Projects

(Select the project that applies to you.)

1. If you are presently employed in a training station, do the following. From your training sponsor, get a current job description of a display worker, noting any major differences between it and that described in the assignment. Also obtain an organization chart show-

ing where the display or visual merchandising department fits into the total operations and its relationship with sales promotion, merchandising, and sales. You may have to draw an organization chart if a copy is not available. Attach these items to this assignment.

2. If you are not employed, or if you are not presently engaged in any display or visual merchandising duties, do the following. From the job description of a display worker, which duties seem most

challenging and interesting to you? Which skills do you already have, and which will you need to develop? What can you begin doing now to develop the skills required in display and visual merchandising? In what area do you plan to develop these skills? What future career do you plan for yourself, and how will these beginning duties help you in preparing for your future? Answer these questions in a brief summary and attach it to this assignment.

3

Safety and Security in Visual Merchandising

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. describe the special precautions to observe to assure your own personal safety in display work;
2. list the hazards and precautions to observe when working on a ladder;
3. tell the danger areas of a display window area and how to avoid serious injuries there;
4. list the safety rules of a display shop and storeroom area;
5. describe how to erect a safe display, including mannequins, props, and merchandise; and
6. name at least five security precautions in display work.

Terms to Know

fine jewelry—a classification of items that includes rings, necklaces, brooches, watches, and other assorted jewelry items. These include gold and precious stones, fine watches, and sterling silver, platinum, and other fine metals. Generally, jewelry is either classed as fine jewelry or fashion (costume) jewelry. The latter class is usually inexpensive and of lesser quality.

flatware and hollowware (FLAT ware and HOL low ware)—any of a group of sterling silver or stainless steel table goods. Flatware pieces are eating utensils and serving pieces. Hollowware consists of bowls, platters, trays, and other table accessories.

monofilament (MON o FILL uh mint)—a single strand of very fine nylon thread such as is

found in fishing line. It is transparent, very strong, and will not mar the fine finish on merchandise.

shoe sock—a stretch sock that fits over a shoe. Display workers use shoe socks for walking about inside of windows to protect the flooring, prevent tracking in dirt. Also they give nonslip protection.

sprinkler head—part of the first protection system built into the ceilings. The heads project downward about three inches. When triggered by heat, they come on automatically, spraying water to douse a fire before it gets started.

theatre gauze (GAWZ)—a special type of fine mesh fabric that admits plenty of light, but is very strong. It is used in theatre sets to give a hazy or foggy atmosphere.

turntable—a small, round, flat surface that is motorized to give

movement to a display. The motor is geared down so that the table turns slowly.

display window—any closed-in area that faces toward the outside of a store building and has a glass wall. The back may be closed or it can open into the store itself. A display window is usually large enough for a full-sized mannequin to stand in. This distinguishes it from a shadow box, which is small and usually mounted on a wall.

Safety for the Display Worker

You may think of the retail store as a safe place to work and fairly free of safety hazards. When compared to many industrial jobs and construction, retailing appears very safe. It is safe for most retail workers. But the display and visual merchandising job has its share of dangers and personal hazards.

Personal Safety

A display worker spends much time stooping, bending, lifting, working in a strained position, and climbing on ladders, ledges, and tops of merchandising units. First, there is always the danger of falling from high places (see fig. 1). Second, there is always the hazard of muscle strain, particularly back strain.

When you reach to one side while standing on a ladder, you are off balance and you can strain your muscles. If you attempt to lift or move something heavy while in this position, you are likely to injure your back. Back injuries are serious and they tend to remain with you for life.

Injuries occur from improper lifting, straining in an off-balanced position, falling from ladders and ledges, cutting with knives and power tools, and inhaling paint and chemical fumes. The display worker must be constantly aware of the dangers of the job and use common sense to prevent them. One rule will help you be alert and prevent an accident.

When you are working in an unnatural position or location, think through, ahead of time, what you are doing. If you are unsure of yourself or the condition, don't do it. Ask for assistance, or get another display worker to help you.

Most accidents happen through carelessness or failing to think about what you are doing.

The second safety hazard is improper lifting of heavy objects or equipment. When you attempt to lift an object that weighs over 20 pounds, face it squarely with your body. Off-balance lifting will probably result in pinched back nerves. If the object is lower than your waistline, squat down, bend your knees, and lift with your legs. Keep your back in a straight line. Never bend down from the waist and lift with your back.

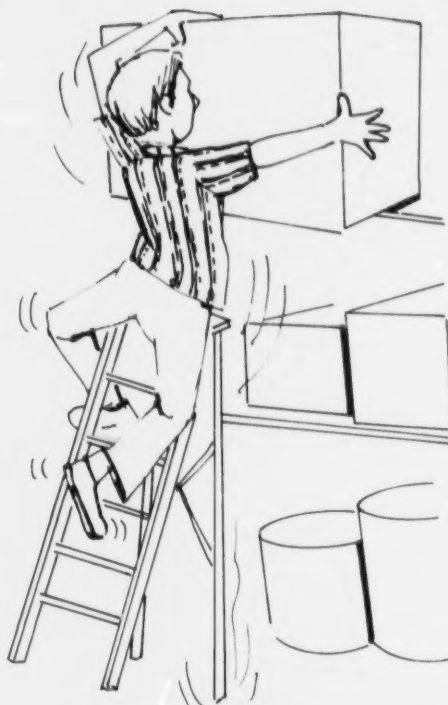


Figure 1. Ladders are dangerous. Keep sound footing. Never overreach your arm's length.

Ladder Safety

Display workers spend some time on a ladder almost daily. Ladders are dangerous workplaces at best. For maximum strength and security, wooden ladders are preferred to light aluminum models. You should not use any ladder without inspecting it first. If it is defective in any way, don't use it. Never use a short step-stool because there is too much danger of it toppling when you lean over or stretch. Never go beyond the third step from the top. If the ladder is not tall enough, use another one that is the right height.

Brace yourself with your legs when working on a ladder. If possible, use one hand to hold onto the ladder. If you must use both hands, get the ladder as close to the work space as possible. Never use a ladder in a sales area where there is customer traffic. You may drop a hammer, staple gun, or display prop. You don't want a

customer to accidentally bump into your ladder while you are working. If the ladder work must be in a traffic area, have a helper hold the ladder and keep customers from underneath it. Block off a portion of a department where display work on a ledge, wall unit, or top of a merchandiser unit is taking place.

Many display props and pieces of equipment are stored in display storerooms. Ladders must be used to stack the items and get them out of storage. Never place your ladder in front of a door or entryway without a helper to guard it. Never overreach. Don't attempt to get something that is out of arm's length or lean away from the ladder to reach it.

Display Window Safety

Display window work can be even more hazardous. You must think *safety* all the time you work in a window, even if it has an open

back. The front glass is your greatest area of danger. If you bump it too hard, drop a tool that smashes it, or topple off a ladder into the window, you run a high risk of serious injury (see fig. 2). The window will either smash to the outside where it can injure people on the street, or it can break inward and injure you. Each piece of flying glass is a missile that cuts and stabs like a sharp knife blade. In addition to serious personal injury, glass mars display props, mannequins, and merchandise. And it is expensive to replace.

Some ladder work is often required inside a window. It is necessary to check and replace burned-out flood and spotlights. Some items are suspended from the ceiling. And some props that need to be installed are higher than your normal reach. Use a short wooden stepladder. Make sure that the footing is secure. And leave yourself room to work without bumping the window glass. Use *shoe socks* to prevent worn places on the carpet and to protect hardwood flooring. They also provide anti-slip protection on ladder steps. Check for loose carpet threads.

Make certain that mannequins are securely mounted on bases. Check all props to see that they are secure and won't fall or topple into the glass. Work your way out of a window. Install props and mannequins in the farthest place from the exit door. Then finish near the exit. Avoid going back and forth, as this will increase your chances of knocking over or bumping into props and mannequins.

One last precaution for closed-back windows: They can become very hot, with little air circulation. The battery of lights plus lack of air circulation raises the inside temperatures to well over 100°F. You can easily become the victim of heat exhaustion. When you feel yourself getting too warm or feeling faint, leave the window for awhile until you can return and finish.

Display Shop and Storeroom Safety

Some area within the store is necessary for storage and preparation of display materials. Storage and shop areas are usually found together. You are responsible for keeping the shop and storage area safe. This is not only for yourself, but for fellow workers, too. OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has strict rules on display shop operations and the people who work there. Management is held responsible for safety violations. But you should be interested in your own personal safety as well.

Some large retail operations have a display carpenter shop, staffed with professional carpenters and cabinetmakers. These workers do all construction and fabrication of display props, including covering. Display workers can only install display units. In other stores, some props are constructed and fabricated by display workers as part of their normal duties. In most stores, props are purchased already finished, and little or no construction takes place. Regard-

less of the nature of the display shop, observe these safety rules and regulations:

1. *Never smoke* in the display shop or storeroom area. Neither should you strike a match or lighter. Too much flammable material is present to run the risk of fire or explosion (see fig. 3).

2. Never operate any power machinery or tools without proper supervision, instruction, or experience in their use. This includes power saws, shapers, lathes, drills, and routers.

3. Power paint sprayers require a special area for use. This space must be well ventilated. If you spray paint, always use the mask to avoid inhaling paint and chemical fumes.

4. Always check electrical equipment before using it in a display. This includes small motors, turntables, and lighting, as well as power tools. Check for defective parts, irregular or unusual noises, and frayed wiring and plugs.

5. The worktable area must be kept clean and free of trash, litter, tools, and equipment. Never leave anything on the floor that might



Figure 2. Glass is your greatest hazard while working in a display window.

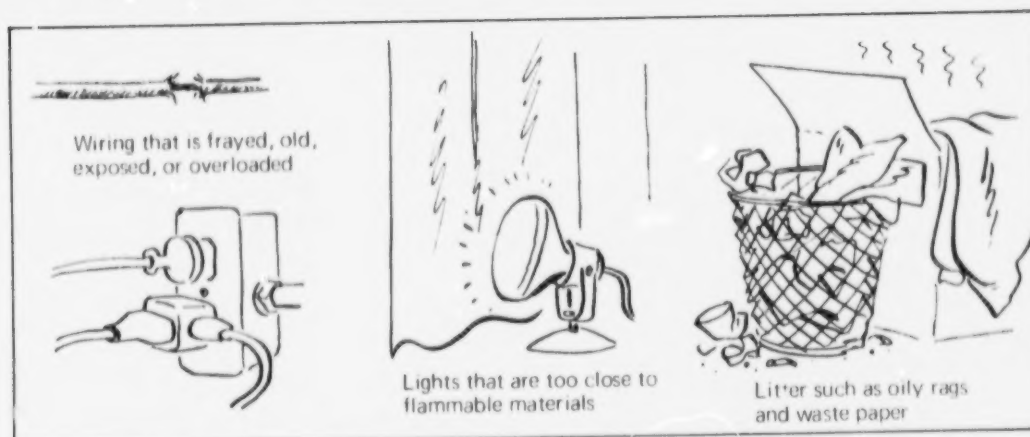


Figure 3. Fire is always a potential danger. These are the three greatest causes of fire in display areas.

cause tripping, slipping, or cutting. Put all trash and litter in the proper bin for removal. Make sure that no oily, paint-filled rags are left in open containers (see fig. 4). Check all cans for tight lids, especially on thinners, lacquers, and varnishes.

6. In the storage area, never stack items all the way to the ceiling. Sprinkler heads need at least 18 inches of clearance in order to be effective in case of fire. Make sure items are securely stacked and will not fall over if bumped.

7. Never leave open ladders in the storage area. Close the ladder and return it to its proper storage area.

8. Wipe up all spills immediately, including water. Mop the floor dry. Pick up wire, nails, and anything that may puncture the skin.

9. Think *safety* all the time you are working. Make your workroom safe. Remember that fire is your greatest enemy here. Many flammable materials, sawdust, paint fumes, and materials that are easily set afire are in storage.

Display Safety

When installing a display, think especially about customers' safety. Never put a display where it will obstruct normal customer traffic, or where it would be easily hit and knocked over. Make sure all props are securely mounted.

Mannequins require special attention in a display. A standing figure should always be securely mounted and supported on a heavy metal base. A steel support rod attaches to the base and to the buttock of the mannequin. Make sure these are firmly seated in the holes, and tighten the thumbscrews. A mannequin's head, arms, hands, and sometimes legs are removable. These have a metal lock ring to secure them in place.

Make sure the arm, hand, or leg is rotated until it is securely locked. Otherwise, it will fall and damage the mannequin, or injure a customer. Remember that small children are attracted to mannequins and will examine them out of curiosity. A poorly mounted or located mannequin can fall and injure the child.

Place mannequins where they are easily seen, but do not offer any obstruction. All forms for holding garments should be securely seated or placed on a stable base. Signs and sign holders should not obstruct traffic. Avoid using wires that suspend items from a ceiling or post, especially in a high traffic area.

Check all lighting on a display. Make sure no fabric, paper, or flammable material is near the lights. Lights should never be located where they can be touched by customers or workers.

Be careful about where you lo-

cate display merchandise. Heavy items should be on lower levels and not where they could be knocked over. Display them only on firm support bases. Banners and posters should be at least 8 feet above floor level to avoid hitting people in the head or eyes.

When you finish a display, check it over thoroughly. Look for pins, nails, wire, tools, or anything that you have left over. Look for possible obstructions. Check props and mannequins for security. Look overhead for anything that might be hanging too low.

Display Security

Retailers face huge losses annually from theft. In many kinds of stores, the security of merchandise is a major concern. Displays are one area where security is needed. A display in an open area, including open-back windows, are an invitation to theft. For this reason, you must install merchandise that will prevent or minimize theft. Except where you have a display in a closed-back window, follow these security rules:

1. All garments on a display form should be pinned or tied onto the form. Pinning is necessary to make the garment look right, and to make a good fit. It also secures the garment so it cannot be easily removed. You must



Figure 4. Where paints and solvents are used and stored, be sure there is adequate ventilation.

be careful in pinning a garment so that it is not damaged. Use fine silk pins for silk and silk-polyester fabrics. Regular-sized bank pins, or T-head pins, will leave a permanent hole in silks.

2. Put only one shoe of a pair on display. Leave the other shoe in the box in the stockroom, marking the box as to the location of the display.

3. Accessory items need special attention. Scarves should be firmly knotted, tied, or pinned to a mannequin, form, or display prop. A handbag on a mannequin's hand should be secured with fine wire or nylon monofilament line. Never place a handbag or gloves on display without securing them. A single glove should be put on a glove form.

4. Men's ties, belts, socks, handkerchieves, and other small accessory items need to be secured. This is done by either putting them on a form or mannequin, or by pinning or tying them with nylon line. Never leave them loose on a display.

5. Never use expensive jewelry on a display. Use inexpensive

look-alikes, and these should be secured with wire or monofilament line. Any small item is easily removed and put in the shoplifter's pocket, bag, or shopping bag.

6. Treat an open-back window the same as an open display in the store interior. It is just as easy for a shoplifter to reach in and remove loose items. Some stores use a sheet of clear plastic in the open space. An alternative is theatre gauze stretched on a wooden frame. Both let the light through to keep the open concept, but add protection for the merchandise.

7. Keep the displays in the high-traffic areas. A display is only effective if seen by customers, and the traffic areas are where they are seen. These also deter easy theft. In an out-of-the-way area, a shoplifter can remove items with little chance of being seen.

8. Display workers must be careful in taking any merchandise for display purposes. Use either a loan book or markdown book, or whatever device the store recommends. Check out merchandise with the department head and sign for it. The memo should note who took the item, the date taken, the location of the display, and the date the item was returned to the department. This includes items for accessories or props, as well as merchandise for the display.

9. Daily inspection of displays is a good habit for two reasons. First, the worker who installs the display knows exactly what is on it and can spot missing items. Second, it is a good habit to keep displays clean and make sure props and merchandise are in place. If one area often has missing merchandise, then the display needs to be relocated.

Some merchandise presents special security problems. Giftware, flatware and hollowware, dinnerware, and fine jewelry require security. This is difficult to do when these items are on display. They cannot be pinned, nailed, or wired easily. On open display shelves and racks, these items can be

picked up for inspection. They are in as much danger of breakage as theft. Expensive items should be displayed behind clear plastic modules or sheet plastic if there is a security problem.

Store design differs widely for this kind of visual merchandising. But display workers must often devise alternate methods where security is tight. Some items such as porcelain or glass can be glued to a prop. Special glues will not mar the merchandise. Flatware and hollowware pieces can often be tied to a flat display board using fine covered wire or monofilament line. These will not scratch or mar the surface. Very expensive items should be displayed only in a locked showcase or a locked display window. Fine jewelry should be removed from display windows overnight.

Electronic products such as small calculators, radios, cassette recorders, and small personal-sized televisions need security when displayed outside of locked showcases. Most stores prefer small chains or snip-proof cables attached to the display items and secured to the fixture. This method permits personal inspection by the customer but prevents shoplifting. And most customers will accept this type of security device.

Questions

1. What are the two greatest dangers a display worker faces in normal, everyday duties?
2. How do most injuries occur in the performance of duties?
3. What one safety rule will help prevent injuries and accidents?
4. What is the proper method of lifting to prevent personal injury?
5. What should you look for in selecting a ladder for display work?
6. What safety rules should you follow when using a ladder?

7. What are the dangers of working in a closed display window?
8. Under what conditions can you operate power tools?
9. Name some things to do that will make a display safe.
10. List five rules for display security.

Project

Give a description of the display workroom, shop area, and storage facility at your training station. What power tools are there? Is there a paint spray booth? Who is authorized to use these? Are any display properties built in the shop

area? Is there a special display area for mannequins? What fire protection equipment is nearby or located within the display area? Is the "No Smoking" rule strictly observed by everyone in the display area?

Prepare a brief, written report, and attach it to this assignment.

4

Developing Display Themes

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to —

1. describe the characteristics of a theme and what it should do in a display;
2. tell what ideas and topics themes are based on; and
3. write and develop themes for any given product or service.

Terms to Know

pizzazz (puh ZAZ)—a common phrase in use today that means showy, flashy, classy, sparkling with wit and charm, having great popular appeal, glittering. It replaces the older term, "oomph."

pun—a play on words; using a word with a double meaning; changing one word in a phrase to make it mean or imply something different. Puns are intended to be funny or slightly humorous.

trite—used over and over (when applied to words and phrases); "hackneyed," dull from overuse, such as the approach, "May I help you?"

Display Is "Show and Tell"

Nearly every elementary school student has had experience in basic display communication. It is called "show and tell." You perhaps recall some of your experiences with that exercise. You brought some object to school—perhaps your pet dog, a seashell, an unusual rock, or a leaf. You presented your object and told a story about it. That is what display is all about.

In our modern world of marketing, display is more sophisticated. But it is still a means of communicating a product, a service, or an idea. Display communicates by visual presentation and written communication called signing.

This assignment concerns itself more with the written communication of telling a story. No display is complete without some type of sign, poster, price card, or copy card. It is the message that gives the important details the customer wants to know about the product on display.

To attract attention, a display has to have a *punch*. This refers to something unusual or distinctive that you don't see everyday. In most cases, a display has a theme. The theme is carried through to the signing. And here is where you can make or break a display's effectiveness.

Sign copy can be very straightforward, or it can sizzle. It can be quietly sophisticated or have a touch of humor. It can communicate with abbreviated copy or show some pizzazz. The communication is determined by the theme, the type of merchandise on display, and the merchandising policies of the store. Your job is to help create good display communication, regardless of what it is.

Generating a Theme

Display and copy themes are usually developed by merchandising and advertising management and passed down to the display staff. In large organizations this is always true.

In small stores and organizations, the display director and advertising manager, sometimes the same person, develops the theme. Only in small, independent stores will the display worker have to develop the theme and carry it out. Even so, this is the really fun part of the job because it is always creative. And it is always a challenge.

The Nature of a Theme

A theme is a subject or topic of presentation. It is the single, unifying factor in a display. A theme can be a fashion look, a color, a current event, a civic concern in the community, or some topic or subject of current interest. A theme can be almost anything. But developing it and carrying it through in your display is the real challenge.

First, a theme must be *interesting*. It has to be something that most people would know and be informed about. It can be hu-

morous, but not ridiculous. It can be sophisticated, but not intellectual or scholarly. It should be obvious and not hidden. It must be of current interest and concern to a large segment of the customer clientele.

Second, a theme *must not be trite*. It should not be a subject that is overworked and seen everywhere else. In other words, it should be original and fresh, full of sparkle and enthusiasm.

Third, a theme should *help sell the merchandise*. It is of little value to develop a theme that has nothing to do with the merchandise itself. The theme has to make sense. Yet it should be thought-provoking and suggest why the customer should buy the merchandise. You do not develop a theme just for the sake of a theme. It must have a message. It is a communication device that has the sole purpose of selling a product or a service.

Analyzing a Theme

To understand how a theme is developed and carried through, it will be helpful to analyze one. In this example, the product to be displayed is a vacuum cleaner. An island display will be used that faces the main aisle. It is immediately in front of the floor care appliance department. You can call attention to the vacuum cleaner in several ways:

- You can use a sign that states, "Special."
- You can use a sign that states, "Today's Best Buy."
- You can use a poster that states, "Spring Housecleaning Time."
- You can use a sign card that states, "Apex Sweep-Mor Upright Vacuum Cleaner," followed by some feature-benefit copy and a price.

These are all commonly used methods of signing a vacuum cleaner display. The question posed here is, "What reaches out and grabs your attention?" In these examples, nothing new, exciting, or creative is used. There's

no real reason to buy, unless a special price is indicated.

The merchandise manager wants to move vacuum cleaners. The sales objective is to sell so many units in a 10-day period. So the manager wants a display to help sell these vacuum cleaners. Your job is to create a sparkling, fresh theme that will attract attention and give a good reason to buy now. How would you handle this assignment? What can you think of that will do the job required?

One suggested method is detailed here so you can analyze a theme and see how it is developed and carried through.

First, a vacuum cleaner is not an appliance that customers purchase every day. It is not really an exciting or interesting object to look at. It does not offer the excitement of new fashions, new styles, or crisp, bright patterns and colors. Apparel displays are nearly always exciting. But household appliances need some boosting.

This needs a message or theme to attract attention and gives a reason to buy now. Something must be used to stop a customer passing by at least long enough to arouse interest. The theme selected here is "Sweep No More, My Lady."

This is a *pun*, or a play on words. In this case, it is a takeoff on the title to an old song, "Weep no more, my lady." Puns are very good copy and theme devices because they use a touch of humor. And they are unusual enough to attract immediate attention. You can make puns on political slogans, popular advertising themes, brand name slogans, and currently popular book or movie titles. A pun is lighthearted. Yet it is serious enough to have a message of importance. In this example, the message clearly says, "Here is an appliance that will take away the drudgery of having to sweep with a broom." Brooms are ugly, they are inefficient in cleaning, they are unsanitary because they stir up dust and dirt, and they require time-consuming labor.

To dramatize this message, you can do several things to suggest getting rid of the broom and taking home a vacuum cleaner. Dress a mannequin in a housedress, with a rag tied around her hair. Place an old, worn-out broom (with dirty straws on the bottom) in her hands. The mannequin is placed behind the vacuum cleaner, and to one side is the half-sheet poster with the theme headline and copy. The contrast between old and new, between hard work and ease, and between dirty and clean forms the message that the display communicates.

You make the contrast so that the vacuum cleaner is obviously desirable. The copy tells why you should buy it now and that the price is reduced. The vacuum cleaner is exceptionally strong, with a long-life motor. It is powerful, and can be used for all types of floors. It has an extended warranty and it has optional attachments to make it more useful as a single household cleaning device.

Here is another useful pun for the same display. In today's society, it is currently popular to discuss equality between the sexes and the women's rights movement. To add a more wry touch of humor, the mannequin can be a man with an apron around the waist. The copy theme headline is changed to read, "A man's home shouldn't be a hassle." It is a play on the old saying, "A man's home should be his castle." Men today often do or, at least, assist in many household chores that were once regarded as belonging exclusively to the female. The display uses *double entendre* (can be taken two ways). It is unusual enough to attract attention.

It will be appreciated by the female customers. And it will be the topic of interest among the male customers. The message is the same. Replace that old, worn-out, dirty, unsanitary, time-consuming, inefficient broom with a new, powerful, all-purpose cleaning appliance. This will save you time,

and it will do a better cleaning job. The vacuum cleaner is a household appliance that will be welcomed and appreciated by every member of the family, regardless of who uses it.

The theme suggestions are intended to do this. The theme must attract attention. It must arouse interest. It must be unusual enough to generate enthusiasm or at least plant an idea. It must make a statement or develop the idea that now is the time to buy this product, or service, or whatever it is you want to sell.

Would you not agree that these themes will do far more in helping sell vacuum cleaners than trite sign copy announcing, "Sale," "Reduced," "Special," "Best Buy," or "Spring Housecleaning Time"?

Some rules exist about using humor in any display or advertising theme. Humor must be funny without being ridiculous or offensive. It must never insult or put down anyone or any idea or organization. It must not slur or slander any group, race, or party. It must be subtle, yet obvious, to nearly everyone who reads it. And it must be appreciated. Humor without appreciation is flat and self-defeating. Puns or plays on words are safe, effective, and still have a selling message.

Other Theme Ideas

Humor and puns are only one of many types of theme ideas. Many themes are serious, some are patriotic, some invoke civic pride and awareness, capture a current news event, or simply suggest a new way to use an old idea. Display themes should be original and fresh. They must never be trite, commonplace, and "worked-to-death."

Themes can be seasonal. Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, anniversaries and weddings, vacation, back to school, Halloween, and Thanksgiving are common seasonal periods. These periods usually have special promotions and displays.

The difficult and challenging part of these seasonal promotions is coming up with different and fresh ideas. Fall, spring, summer, and winter are also overworked seasonal themes. So your approach must be new, creative, and sparkling.

Themes can promote other countries. Foreign countries are in the news. They invoke interest, and they promote travel. They suggest fine, quality products such as British woolens, Irish linens and crystal, French wines and fashions, Italian foods and works of art, German mechanical craftsmanship, Chinese silks and lacquered wares, Japanese porcelains, and African gold and diamonds, as examples. Foreign country themes are always new, fresh, interesting, colorful, and exciting. Use them often and for every season.

Themes are based on current events. Nothing is as fresh as today's newspaper or news broadcast. Today's news events are important, and they capture attention and interest. Use current topics of interest as product themes.

The economy, inflation, political events and elections, slogans, political parties, popular movements, the ecology, environmental concerns, space exploration, and energy conservation are topics of interest and concern to everyone. Capitalize on them in making up themes for various products and services. Remember, a current event is fresh or up-to-date. Use themes that interest people today, not last month or last year.

Themes are based on civic concerns and events. People are interested in their community and the events taking place there. Capitalize on local plays, theatre, rodeos, fairs, United Way, Red Cross, Boy and Girl Scout programs, buildings and construction, historical celebrations and restorations, bond drives, and prominent personalities. These provide excellent theme material and ideas for use in displays.

Themes may be patriotic. Patriotism can be more than the American flag, the "red, white and blue," and Uncle Sam. While these are always good, a patriotic theme is anything that suggests pride in the country, in its accomplishments, in its people, in its freedoms, and in its security. You do not have to wait until July 4 to find patriotic themes. You can find these any time and any season of the year.

Patriotism can be used for many product promotions, including travel, vacation, leisure-time activities, home fixup time, and many more. *A word of caution:* Any time you use the American flag in a display, make sure you display it properly. If you do not know the rules, you can get them from the local scout office or military service recruiting office. They have books or pamphlets that give you proper instructions.

Themes may be objects. Almost any object that is unusual or interesting can be useful as a theme. Antiques are always interesting. Some objects dredged from a junkyard or a flea market can be made into something interesting. For example, a rusty anchor can be used for a marine or nautical theme. An old iron pot can spill out gold coins at the end of a rainbow. An old-fashioned spinning wheel can be used for a fabric theme. Animal hides stretched on frames are ideal for a fur fashion theme. Weathered hardware from old barns, old weathervanes, wooden barrels, birdcages, branding irons, bricks and building blocks, and ceramic dogs and cats, are all excellent theme objects.

Themes may be topics. What topics are of interest to the general public today? Any topic of general interest can become a theme for a display. Because it is interesting and current, it is fresh and appealing. Hit song titles, new movie and television series releases, famous personalities, fads, slogans, cartoon characters, miracle medicines, popular campus pranks and capers, popular books and authors, new inventions, and news-

paper headlines are good topics to use.

Anything can become a theme. Almost anything you can name can become a theme for a display. To be useful, however, it must have these characteristics:

- It must be well-known and familiar to the majority.
- It must be interesting to the majority.
- It must fit the merchandise it is used with.
- It must invite attention and arouse interest.
- It must have an appropriate message.

Developing Copy for Signing

Writing good copy for display signing follows the same rules and guidelines as preparing copy for advertising. A good merchandise sign has a heading or lead-in lines, followed by two or three brief descriptive statements about the product. A good sign never tells a customer what is obvious or can be readily seen. That is a waste of time and space. Rather, the copy must:

- attract attention
- arouse interest
- inform about unknown qualities
- give a reason to buy now
- tell the customer about the benefits of ownership
- state the terms or conditions for purchasing an item.

It need not do any more than that. In fact, if it does these well, the product is already half-sold. Good copy takes the place of a salesperson. As you know, advertising and display signs are regarded as "silent sales assistants." And in today's self-service marketplace, the customer usually relies on displays and advertising for selling.

Unlike theme banners, sales copy in the signing must be straightforward and without frills. The theme banner and display at-

tract attention, arouse interest, and capture the awareness of the customer.

If the theme and display arrangement do their job, the sales copy will do the rest. There can be no humor here. Nor should there be puns or words with double meanings. Words and terms must communicate clearly in sales copy. On the other hand, sales copy can still have plenty of sparkle and zip. There is no need for it to be dull and uninteresting.

A line of leather coats has a patented textured finish called "Crinkle." For sign copy, we use the lead-in or heading:

Crinkle—The Latest Wrinkle in Leather

There is no pun here, nor is one intended. The heading has zip, but it "tells it like it really is." You can be totally honest but still write interesting headlines and copy. Here is another example:

Ultrasuede.® Twice as Nice as Leather

Ultrasuede is a synthetic fabric that closely resembles fine, suede leather. But the heading tells you it is better than leather. The sales copy then gives detailed descriptive information on why it is twice as nice. Again, it is honest, straightforward, and without frills. But it still has plenty of interest for the customer. How much better it is to say it this way than degrade a good product by calling it "imitation leather."

Water buffalo. Toughness with a Touch of Gentleness.

The heading says it all. Water buffalo is a tough, water-resistant, scruffproof, deeply-grained, exotic leather. Your job is to dress up that fact into a descriptive, yet interesting, heading.

You can write good copy without exaggerating or making gross claims that tend to be ridiculous. For example, assume your product is an imitation or fake fur coat. How do you describe it without calling it "fake fur"? You must be honest, but you don't have to cheapen a product that is obviously inexpensive and makes no

claim of being genuine. It is your challenge to be creative in preparing sparkling copy:

Beauty has a Stand-in, or Beauty has a Double Agent

Then the following sales copy gives the facts, features, benefits, and best of all, the price.

These are samples of interesting, eye-catching sales copy lead-ins or headings:

- Happy Times with Denim Blues
- Fall Fashions Flavored with Spice
- Wash on Monday . . . Dry on Monday . . . Wear on Monday
- Rates an "A" on any Campus
- Casual . . . with a Touch of Class
- Fashion Purists Like Our Classics
- Leather is Sleek Chick
- Brute Strength in Butter-Soft Cream
- Our Black Beauty Looks Good in any Race
- Black and White is Always Positive
- For Dreaming on Midsummer Nights
- Leather Boots . . . Hide and Sleek
- Surround Him with Love . . . and a Beautiful Belt
- Navy Blazers . . . See-Worthy
- Freshly Brewed Fashion in Coffee and Cream
- Three-Piece Suits . . . A Blue Chip Investment
- Ensembles for Quick-Change Artists
- Go Western, Young Man
- Lounge for the Rest of your Life
- Gifts that Tell Mother You Care
- A Switch in Time (for fashion watches)
- Up to Your Knees in Boots
- Apparel for Ski-Do's and Ski-Don'ts
- Tennis Fashions for the Love in your Life

Not all headings or lead-ins have to be written in a light,

breezy style. In some stores, merchandise policies would prohibit them. You should write themes and banners for display that match the merchandise, the merchandising policies, and type of customer. It may call for plain, simple, straight-on styles, as was discussed for POS copy in Assignment 11.

Finally, when you plan a display, think of it as a "show-and-tell" exercise. It is the show-and-tell assignment of any retail store. Display has two parts—presentation and communication.

You plan both together. After the merchandise has been selected, plan how you want to present it. Then, plan how you want to communicate the real sales messages to the customer. Display should never be complicated. Keep it simple and always make your message clear.

Questions

1. Explain why display is the "show and tell" of marketing.
2. Name three qualities a display theme should have.

3. What rules should be followed in using *humor* in a display theme?
4. Other than *humor* and *contrast*, what other ideas make good themes? List the characteristics of a good theme.
5. What are the rules for writing good copy and theme banners for display signing?

Project

To aid you in preparing display themes, the following exercise is suggested. It will be fun, challenging, and give you an opportunity to test your creative skills. If you need suggestions or help in getting started, consult your training sponsor.

Instructions: For each of the following examples, prepare at least one theme and theme banner sign for a display. Follow the rules and suggestions in the assignment.

1. a fashion ensemble in navy and camel (tan or beige)
2. a microwave oven

3. a coordinated set of golf wearing apparel
4. a gold and diamond watch
5. a silk blouse with a Chinese design
6. a pair of classic-style, sling pumps (for women's shoes)
7. a matching man's shirt and tie set
8. a fabric-covered lounge chair with heat and vibrator
9. a reversing-type ceiling fan
10. a small, portable, foot-operated air pump.

As an alternative, select 10 different products or services that you would rather use for themes. These should be a mixture of both hard line and soft line merchandise. Do not select all fashion merchandise, since it lends itself to themes more readily than other types.

Tell why you chose each product or service. Write a report, and attach it to this assignment.

5

Visual Merchandising for Self-Selection

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. name three reasons why retailers have moved toward self-selection of merchandise;
2. explain how prepackaging and hang tags aid in self-selection merchandising;
3. describe how fixtures promote self-selection;
4. describe or sketch a point-of-sale merchandise unit;
5. state the purpose of a merchandising guide; and
6. name six considerations that guide you in preparing a self-selection merchandise unit.

Terms to Know

hard lines—a merchandising term used to describe one large group of goods. Generally, groups are divided into hard lines or soft lines. Hard lines include all those items of a “hard” or durable nature such as appliances, furniture, and hardware. Soft lines include all those items of soft or less durable nature, such as fabrics, apparel, domestics, linens, and the like.

merchandise—a style of fixture (see fig. A). It may take on several different forms or shapes. But it is usually a multipurpose unit. It is a low-base, free-standing divider panel that can be used as a pegboard for packaged goods, shelving, or racks for hanging. There is space on one or both ends for featured items or displays.

self-selection—a merchandising technique, it is the same as self-service. The customer can

see, inspect, and make a selection without the aid or assistance of a salesperson. Supermarkets were the first self-service retailers. The trend began as a means of lowering costs by cutting out expensive fixtures and the need for clerks. In the early 1950s, mass merchandisers and discount house operations used the same technique with all classes of merchandise, not just food items.

soft lines—(see hard lines)

The Trend Toward Self-Selection

Merchandising today is geared to self-selection. Even in the traditional department store and specialty shop, merchandise is grouped and arranged for this style of shopping. Visual merchandising plays a strong role in making self-selection an effective technique.

Supermarkets and mass merchandisers started the trend to-

ward self-selection years ago. Today, it has become the main method, and it is very successful. Here are some important reasons for this trend.

1. Today's shopper either knows exactly what he or she wants and prefers to find it quickly, or wants to browse leisurely to see what is available. The shopping center and mall have made leisure shopping a form of entertainment that individuals and families seem to enjoy. When store units are properly merchandised, they satisfy both kinds of needs. Self-selection permits the decided shopper to quickly locate the right department and the merchandise within it. For the casual shopper, self-selection allows the person to see the entire store, to look, to compare, and perhaps to make an unplanned buying decision.

2. Economics is the chief factor for moving toward self-selection. Labor or payroll expense is a major item of cost control. Self-selection allows a reduction in the sales force. Employees can be free to



Self-selection of Warner Press merchandise is much easier because of these displays by E&E Specialties, Inc, Lawrence, Kansas.

move about a department, performing a number of chores, while assisting customers when needed. A much smaller percentage of time is spent in personal selling. More time is spent in cashiering, stock arranging, housekeeping, and security.

A second economic factor is the amount of money assigned to inventory. In the past, too much inventory was kept in the back stockrooms. Money was invested in stock that was not moving or immediately needed. Today, high interest rates prohibit the merchant from investing more money in inventory than is necessary. Self-selection allows most of the inventory to be out front where it can be purchased and replaced as needed. This maintains good appearance and a good selection. When a shipment is received, most of it can be put on the selling floor rather than in the stockroom.

3. Fixtures required for self-selection are usually less expensive, more effective in producing sales, and more flexible in arrangement. A totally new look can be made in a department without re-fixturing. Today's fixtures are more durable, easier to set up and dismantle, and provide an endless variety of arrangements. The next assignment explains fixturing in more detail.

In summary, self-selection is the most effective merchandising technique. It aids the shopper by making merchandise more readily seen

and available. It makes shopping fun, more relaxed, and less of a hassle. It aids the merchant by reducing personnel costs and inventory costs. And it allows a new look without expensive remodeling through an effective fixturing system.

Merchandising Aids for Self-Selection

Prepackaged goods

Many manufacturers began some time ago to package their merchandise for retail sales (see fig. 1). They were not content to let sales be determined by the individual salesperson. When goods are sold individually, sales result directly from the enthusiasm and energy of the salesperson. Retail selling has declined generally over a long period of time. This has brought self-selection and prepackaging to the forefront of modern merchandising.

This method has several advantages. It keeps merchandise clean. Merchandise is more easily displayed and hung on fixtures. The package itself can give a customer the needed sales information and facts about the merchandise. Well-designed packages are tremendous sales agents. They attract attention, take up less space, and give essential information to the customer. Prepackaging almost eliminates the necessity for sales assistance.

A well-designed package tells what the product is, its chief uses and benefits, the price, size, color, and instructions for use where appropriate. Prepackaging is equally effective for both hard line and soft line products. Because of its importance in producing sales, manufacturers spend a great deal of time and money on package design.

Hang Tags

Hang tags provide for garments and wearing apparel what prepackaging does for smaller items. Too often, three or more hang tags on a garment serve to distract rather than to aid the customer. One well-designed hang tag is sufficient. Like a package, it should give the essential facts about product material, size, color, price, care, and use. Hang tags are "silent sales assistants" that greatly aid in self-selection.

Flexible Fixturing

Today's merchandise fixtures are designed for self-selection. Most are made of durable, attractive materials. They show merchandise at its maximum advantage. They hold a large amount of goods in a small amount of space. They have a flexible arrangement and layout within a given amount of space.

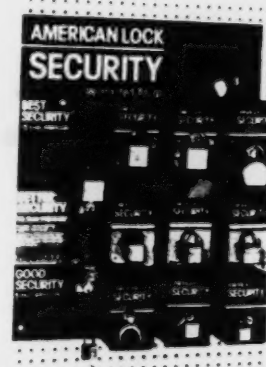


Figure 1. Example of prepackaged items, carded and punched for easy self-selection. (Courtesy Home Center Magazine)

They are easily set up and dismantled when necessary.

An example of the change brought about by fixturing is in the area of wearing apparel. A few years ago, items like slacks, blouses, skirts, and jackets were folded and laid on top of tables and gondolas. Today, almost all wearing apparel is hung on specially designed racks or *merchandisers*. Some are hung on specially designed hangers. While dress shirts are still folded and packaged for protection, most sportswear and casual shirts are hung on fixtures. Also, many accessory items like belts, gloves, hosiery, shoes, hats, and jewelry are displayed on special fixtures.

Signing

The sign is an important tool in self-selection. In the absence of prepackaged items, a sign must give the main facts to the customer. It must be prominent, yet not detract from the display or arrangement. Many signs are designed by the manufacturer as an aid in setting up a display. These come under the general heading of "point-of-sale" merchandising aids. They will be discussed in detail in a later assignment.

Most signs are produced in-house. They are either made by the sign shop with mechanical equipment, or are hand lettered and painted. A good sign gives the brand name or identifies the product, a few facts about the item (known as *sales copy*), and the price.

Point-of-Sale Displays

When display arrangements are placed in the vicinity of the fixturing, self-selection is greatly enhanced. In many stores, the merchandising guide for each department calls for a display on one end of the fixture. Figure 2 shows a mannequin placed in the center of a rack of apparel and accessories. Figure 3 shows a merchandiser for power tools with packaging used

as a part of the total arrangement. Figure 4 shows a display of related products within a department. In this case, tops and pants are selected for display in the women's sportswear department.

Merchandising for Self-Selection

Many large companies use a planning guide for each department's merchandise. The guide is a layout plan for the entire department, plus a layout guide for each fixture or merchandiser. This gives a uniform look to the entire store. It ensures that each department achieves the total effectiveness of its merchandising.

The guide shows how each type of fixture is to be stocked. For example, on a multilevel fixture as shown in figure 5, featured items are on each end. The general line is displayed in the large, center section. Guides show how to merchandise sizes, colors, styles, fabrics, and patterns, when these apply.

In smaller stores, standard guides are seldom used. In these cases, either the merchandise manager or display worker is responsible for arrangement. These considerations determine how to arrange for self-selection:

1. The amount and kind of merchandise is the first consideration. How many items are to be dis-



Figure 2. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

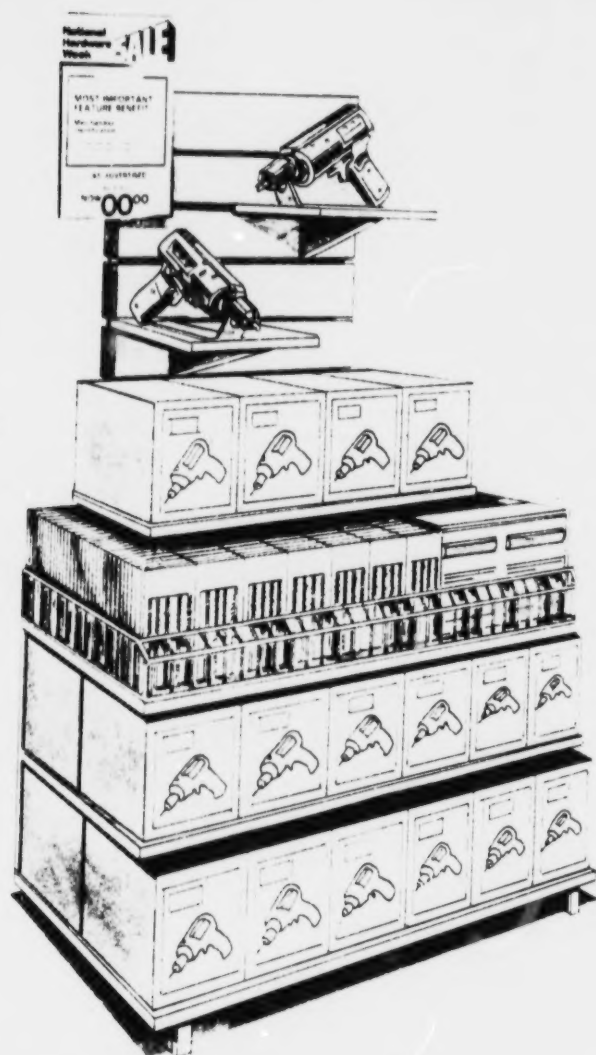


Figure 3. A display for self-selection (Courtesy Sears, Roebuck & Co.)

played? What type of merchandise? How many different sizes, colors, patterns, and lot numbers are to be displayed? Of these, how many can be grouped together? For example, out of several different lots of sport shirts, how many can be hung together in size and price-range divisions?

2. The next consideration is how many items can be effectively displayed in a given amount of space. Generally, merchandising plans are made on a square footage basis. More items displayed per square foot makes for a more effective use of floor space. For exam-

ple, space can still be used efficiently for large, bulky items such as boxes of chain saws, with proper merchandising. Three brands can take up equal space, with a "good," "better," and "best" arrangement. Where signing is carefully planned, the customer is given a wide choice. But a minimum amount of space is needed.

3. Plan your merchandising through the customer's eyes. Look at the arrangement as if you were the customer. What are the most important things that the customer considers in making the selection? Arrange items from that point of

view. If color and pattern are most important in fashion merchandise, then make these the dominant divisions of your arrangement. If price is the most important part of the decision, then divide items into groups so the customer can most easily make a price selection.

A low-priced item may be the most desirable, but not always. Sometimes, it is best to show the midline most prominently, if the price is good, considering value and quality. Low-priced items are displayed for the most budget-minded customers, and high-priced items are featured as having the best overall value.

4. Make maximum use of fixtures. It's inefficient to have too few items in a self-selection department. And it's poor merchandising to overcrowd the fixture. Make certain that items are grouped together in a logical sequence, and that accessories are nearby. Related merchandising makes maximum use of space and helps increase sales. For example, next to the slack merchandiser is the display rack for belts. Ties are merchandised next to or on top of the shirt track. Socks and hosiery are displayed next to shoes. Hardware and accessory parts are displayed next to power tools. In figure 6, notice how items are grouped and interrelated in a sporting goods department.

5. Select appropriate fixtures for the type of merchandise. In too many smaller shops, there are only one or two types of fixtures. These are used sometimes for the wrong type of merchandise. Items must be placed where customers can reach them and make a selection. Stacking items too high places them out of the customer's reach. And it obstructs the view throughout the department as well.

Stacking or placing items too low is not only inconvenient, but they may be overlooked. Tables and flat-topped surfaces are too often misused, and merchandise is lost. Tabletops keep the merchan-



Figure 4. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)



This Dolly Madison Bakery wraparound display places a maximum of product within easy reach in a minimum small space. (Courtesy of RP Creative Sales, Inc., Burbank, California)

dise at the right height. But they often invite customers to jumble and mix items while they look for the right size, pattern, fabric, or style.

6. Place featured items in highly visible locations. It does little good to advertise or promote merchandise and then hide it in the store. All featured, new, or specially promoted items should be next to the main aisle or traffic area. They should be placed on the most visible spot on the fixture.

Techniques of Self-Selection

Almost any product line, regardless of size, can be adapted to self-selection. Small items are easily grouped and hung on pegboard hooks, arms, or shelf brackets. Prepackaged goods are usually hole-punched by the manufacturer for this purpose. Wearing apparel and fashion goods are also easily merchandised for self-selection. These garments are always grouped and hung either on wall racks or special garment merchandise fixtures (see fig. 7).

Large, bulky items present more of a problem in self-selection. But they can still be artistically arranged and placed in attractive areas. Large items are usually individually boxed. This is true for such things as room-sized air conditioners, ceiling fans, power tools, wheelbarrows, lawn mowers, and other similar items. The cartons form the base, and serve almost like a display table. Several selected units are removed and placed on top of the cartons as display models. To make self-selection effective, you must arrange the items in a neat, attractive grouping. Signing is used to communicate the selling message.

Signs are the key in many such arrangements. They must identify the product, give two or three sales facts, list some benefits, and give the price. Figure 8 shows that even items like freestanding fireplaces can be attractively merchan-

Featured Item Here Related Item display	categories and lot numbers Top Shelf or Hang Rod			Featured Item Here Related Item display
		Shelf		
		Shelf		
	Bottom Shelf or Hang Rod			
		Table Top		
		Table Top		
	1	2	3	

Merchandising arrangement guide—for table, gondola, wall unit, showcase, or multitier merchandiser
 Run in sizes small to large, from top to bottom, from left to right.
 Run in colors warm to cool, top to bottom, left to right.
 Run in patterns by mixing bold with solids for maximum contrast.
 Fill in lot numbers and sizes on section spaces.

Figure 5. A merchandising arrangement guide to standardize appearance in all departments



Figure 6. Grouping items for self-selection (Courtesy Sports Retailer, Michael Lopez Designs, Inc., Chicago)

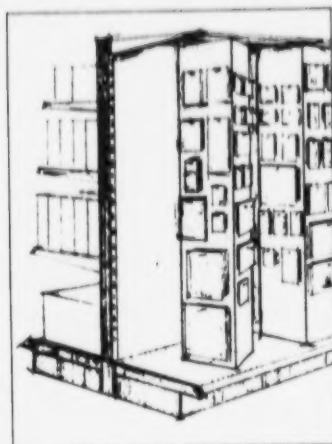


Figure 7. Small items in an effective arrangement for self-selection

dised. Each unit has a different color and style of brick or stone paneling behind it. This both adds color and attracts attention. Signing gives the important selling facts beside each unit. Note that fireplace accessories are displayed alongside the units.

Using Merchandising Aids

Many manufacturers design various merchandising aids to help sell their products. These can be made available to the retailer at the time of purchase. Often, they are supplied as part of the services of the wholesaler or sales representative. Such aids may include point-of-sale display units, signs, or banners. These are professionally and artistically designed. They can be used in windows or on interior displays. Whenever such materials arrive with a shipment, they should be directed to the display department. These are especially helpful if you have no sign shop or display shop for constructing such items.

Even if you decide not to use the ready-made materials, they are a good source of useful and effective ideas. You can ask the buyers, merchandise managers, and department heads to save them for you. They need to clean their desks anyway, and are happy to give these away.

In large stores that have professional display shops, merchandising aids and signs can be made in-house. These are a part of the designs submitted by the display or visual merchandising manager. They give a truly unified image to the entire store.

Other Resources

Ads in magazines, books on merchandise display found in public libraries, and literature from other community stores are good sources for new merchandising concepts. If you really think *merchandising*, you will begin to see and collect new merchandising ideas.

Manufacturers and suppliers, wholesale agents, and salespeople will give you all types of pamphlets, brochures, and printed matter for merchandising ideas. Artists build a "morgue," or file, of picture and illustration aids. They

clip from every source they see and file these by item or category.

Whenever they need a particular aid, they simply go to the file and usually find something that will help them. A display worker needs to do the same. Build a file of merchandising ideas, indexing or cataloging these any way you like. Then when you need a certain idea or theme, the file will be a big help to you.

Make a habit of saving supplier catalogs, such as those for fixtures, mannequins, lighting, and display accessories. These often give helpful hints on merchandising different areas and departments.

Subscribe to professional magazines, such as *Visual Merchandising*, as an example. This keeps you current on techniques, newest trends, fixturing, lighting, store design and layout, the latest in merchandising, remodeling, and creating new looks in the store.

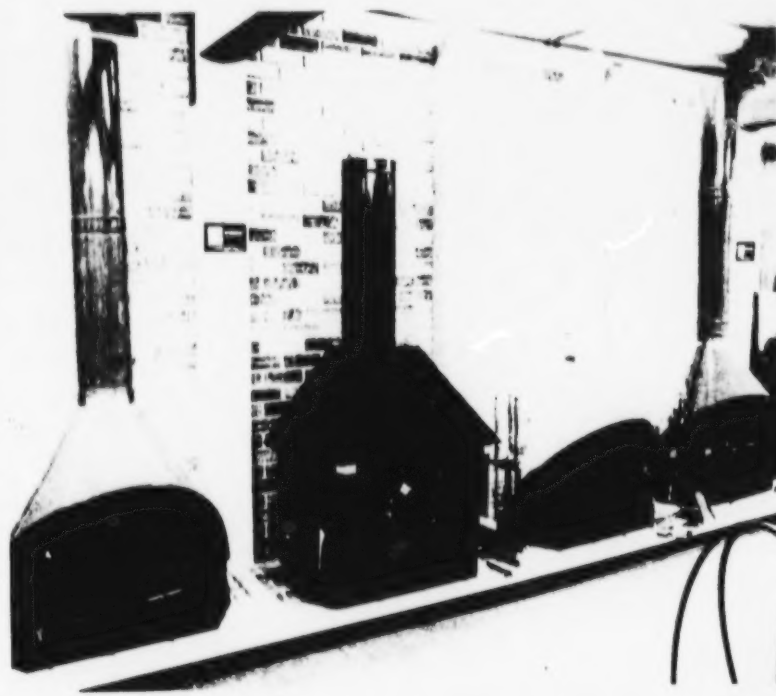


Figure 8. Merchandising large, bulky items (Courtesy Home Center Magazine)

Questions

1. Briefly summarize the three main reasons why retailers began using the *self-selection merchandising technique*.
2. How does *prepackaging* aid in self-selection?
3. How do *hang tags* aid in self-selection of wearing apparel?
4. Briefly explain how *fixtures* aid in self-selection merchandising.
5. How important is *signing* in today's merchandising technique?
6. What is the role of display in *point-of-sale merchandising*?
7. What is a *merchandising planning guide*, and how is it used?
8. In the absence of a standard

merchandising guide, what six considerations should be made in self-selection?

9. What techniques can be used for large, bulky items of merchandise?
10. Where can you get new merchandising ideas for self-selection?

Project

If your training station uses a standardized merchandising guide for self-selection, obtain a copy, and attach it to this assignment. If you cannot get a copy to attach to the assignment, ask your training sponsor if you can trace or sketch

from it. If such guides are not available, do the following:

1. Select one product line carried by your training station.
2. Select an appropriate fixture for that product.
3. Make a sketch or line drawing of the fixture.
4. Show how that product might be displayed or grouped on that fixture.
5. If color, sizes, styles, patterns, or quality grades are important in that product line, show on the sketch an appropriate grouping and arrangement. (Use the illustration in the assignment as a guide.)

6

Fixturing

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. list nine materials commonly used to manufacture fixtures;
2. list five types of standard units and two types of specialty units;
3. name three decisions that must be made when choosing fixtures;
4. list three questions to ask when weighing cost against benefit;
5. name three qualities to look for in fixturing.

Terms to Know

components—one of a number of related parts from which a whole system may be created. For example, the components of a basic stereo system might include the cassette deck, the compact-disc player, the speakers, and the receiver.

configuration—the pattern or design of an object as formed by an arrangement of its parts.

cost-benefit ratio—a formula which weighs the cost of an item against its benefits in order to evaluate whether the item is worth purchasing. If the cost outweighs the benefits, the item is probably not worth purchasing.

fixturing—refers collectively to the fixtures in a store on or in which merchandise is displayed, or to the process of installing or stocking fixtures.

freestanding—capable of standing alone without support from or attachment to another object.

functional—designed for maximum usefulness, without special regard to beauty or decoration.

laminate—(n.) a building material created by pressing together several thin layers of wood.

modular—composed of a number of similar components or modules any of which can be removed or added to form new configurations.

plated—coated with a thin layer of metal, such as gold or silver.

veneer—wood which is covered with a thin layer of higher-quality wood to give it an appearance of superior quality.

Definition and Characteristics of Fixturing

Fixturing, as the name implies, refers to the fixed-position tables, racks, and various other items in a store that are used to display merchandise. Unlike mannequins, props, and other display items that are frequently moved and changed, fixtures generally stay in one fixed place for a relatively long period of time.

Some fixtures, such as built-in cases and shelves, are virtually permanent. They may be planned into the original store design to be as much a part of the store struc-

ture as the floors or walls. Other fixtures, such as large display tables, are semipermanent. They are not built into the structure, but they are not designed to be moved about very often. Still other fixtures, such as lightweight racks, may be moved easily as part of a display change, but they are rarely moved as often as mannequins or props.

Fixtures may be either modular or nonmodular. Modular fixtures are extremely popular today. They consist of various components that can be rearranged at will to create new looks and functions. This gives the store the flexibility and versatility to redesign a fixtured area without being limited by the specific design and function of the fixturing itself. Nonmodular fixtures, on the other hand, cannot be easily altered to fulfill more than a limited number of functions.

Material Construction of Fixtures

Today, fixtures are manufactured in virtually every kind of material imaginable, including

chrome, aluminum, plastic, melamine, wood, brass, glass, Plexiglas, and fiberglass.

One of the factors a manufacturer must consider in choosing a material for a fixture is the function the fixture will serve. For example, glass and Plexiglas are good choices for cubes in which to display folded clothing, because they are transparent, giving the customer an uninterrupted view of the merchandise. Chrome is a good choice for racks that hold hangers; it is a strong, weight-bearing material and can easily be manufactured in an appropriate tubular shape.

Function is not the only factor the fixture manufacturer must take into account in selecting materials. Since fixtures are highly visible to customers, they must be in keeping with the store's image and with current trends. Today, for example, many upscale stores favor wood and brass fixtures, which convey an image of tradition and high quality. Clothing stores that market to young people, on the other hand, may pass over such materials in favor of sleek, modern-looking melamine.

A final factor in determining which materials to use for fixtures is practicality. Fixtures can be subject to a lot of wear and tear during display changes, customer handling, and other day-to-day events in the retail environment. Therefore, manufacturers prefer to use materials that are durable and easy to maintain. This is one reason melamine has become so popular for fixturing. It is tough, lightweight, needs no repainting, and can be easily cleaned with a damp cloth. Plexiglas, a synthetic alternative to glass, has become popular for similar reasons. It is transparent like glass, but more practical because it is much lighter and is break-resistant.

Types of Fixtures

Fixtures fall into three general categories: standard units, specialty units, and tubular units. Standard units include tables, gondolas, showcases, racks, and wall units. Specialty units include towers and cubes. Tubular units are modular designs that enable stores to create a variety of fixture arrangements.

Standard Units

Tables are old standbys that have been used by retailers for a long time. They are seen most commonly in food stores, discount stores, and variety stores. Other kinds of retailers use them to a more limited degree. They come in many styles, materials, and design configurations.

The traditional display table has somewhat limited functions and is used mainly as a means of setting out merchandise for a special promotion or final clearance. Recently, however, more functional tables have been introduced to the retail environment. For example, the table in figure 1 is an attractive three-tiered unit, rather than a box shape with one flat display surface. The "tier"

concept it illustrates is popular because it allows retailers to make maximum use of space and, at the same time, creates an interesting geometric look. This table is also designed for mobility, with lightweight melamine construction and optional casters.

Gondolas are tall, tablelike fixtures with shelves on two or four sides. They may be made of painted steel, wood and metal, particle board (fig. 2), or other materials. Gondolas can be used to display almost any kind of merchandise, and this versatility makes them popular with all kinds of retailers. Many of them also have adjustable shelves and pegboard hooks, so that they can be adapted to different displays as the retailer's needs change.

Showcases have long been associated with the display of jewelry and other fine, expensive merchandise. They come in a variety of styles and can be free-standing, wall-mounted, or configured into a continuous counter. Showcases are available in full-vision, half-vision, or jeweler-vision styles, as shown in figure 3.

Racks are usually intended to hold wearing apparel and accessory merchandise. They come in a

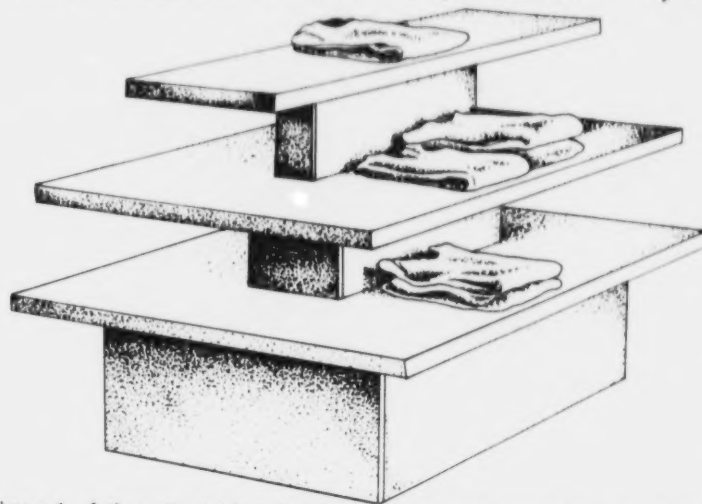


Figure 1. A three-tier table unit that offers attractive possibilities for displaying a maximum of merchandise, yet is easily moved about on its casters. (Courtesy of the NU-ERA Group, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri)

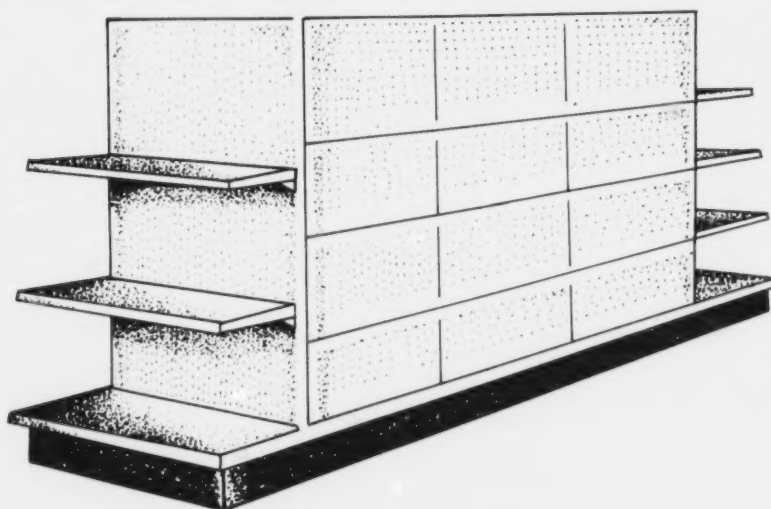


Figure 2. Particle-board gondola. Peg holes can be used to attach hooks for hanging displays. (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos & Co., Atlanta, Georgia)

great variety of styles (fig. 4), which can be used in various combinations to serve specific purposes.

Wall units have a wide variety of uses for many different kinds of merchandise. They can be adapted to almost any specification, and are made from many different materials. One of the most popular varieties of wall unit today is the *wall panel*. This is a modular design that consists of a grooved or gridded wall that accommodates various hooks, shelves, rack hardware, and other components designed to hold merchandise (fig. 5). The components, called *face-outs*, can be rearranged easily within the grooves or grids to meet changing display needs. Grooved wall panels are called *slatwalls*. Gridded wall panels are called *gridwalls* or *grid systems*.

Specialty Units

Towers are freestanding vertical units with shelves, most commonly used to display giftware and other fine goods (fig. 6). Because they hold only a limited amount of merchandise while taking up several feet of floor space, they are not very practical, but they do give a look of exclusiveness that certain retailers may desire. Towers come in many different designs and materials and may be open or glass-fronted.

Freestanding or wall-mounted *cubes* give a compact, contemporary look to a display (fig. 7). For versatility, free-standing cubes are often sold on a modular basis, whereby the retailer purchases a cube base, the desired number of cubes, and an appropriate number of assembly clips, then puts the cubes together on the base in an

appropriate configuration.

Melamine is a popular material for cubes because of its sturdy construction and contemporary appearance. Shatterproof glass and Plexiglas are also popular cube materials, particularly when the retailer wants the customer to be able to see the merchandise from more than one side.

Tubular Units

Tubular units are better known as the display worker's "do-it-yourself" kits. They consist of various lengths of tubing, typically made of metal, that the display worker can quickly and easily assemble into display units that fit the store's needs precisely. For example, for a retail clothing environment, tubes might be assembled into base units for shelves and racks on which folded and hanging clothing can be displayed. That is just one example of a tubular unit. Tube components can also be used to create a wall divider between departments, a triangular tower that tucks into a corner, a multitiered structure, or virtually any other type of display unit.

Tubular systems are popular because they represent the ultimate in design flexibility. Once a tubular unit is in place, the retailer can add elements to it as necessary, or take away parts of it and replace them with others, or even disassemble the whole structure and use the tubes and other modular components to create an entirely different display.

Choosing Appropriate Fixturing

Choosing fixtures for a store is usually the responsibility of the visual merchandising manager and/or display manager (or, if the store is relatively small, the general manager). Ideally, decisions about a store's major fixtures should be made at the time the

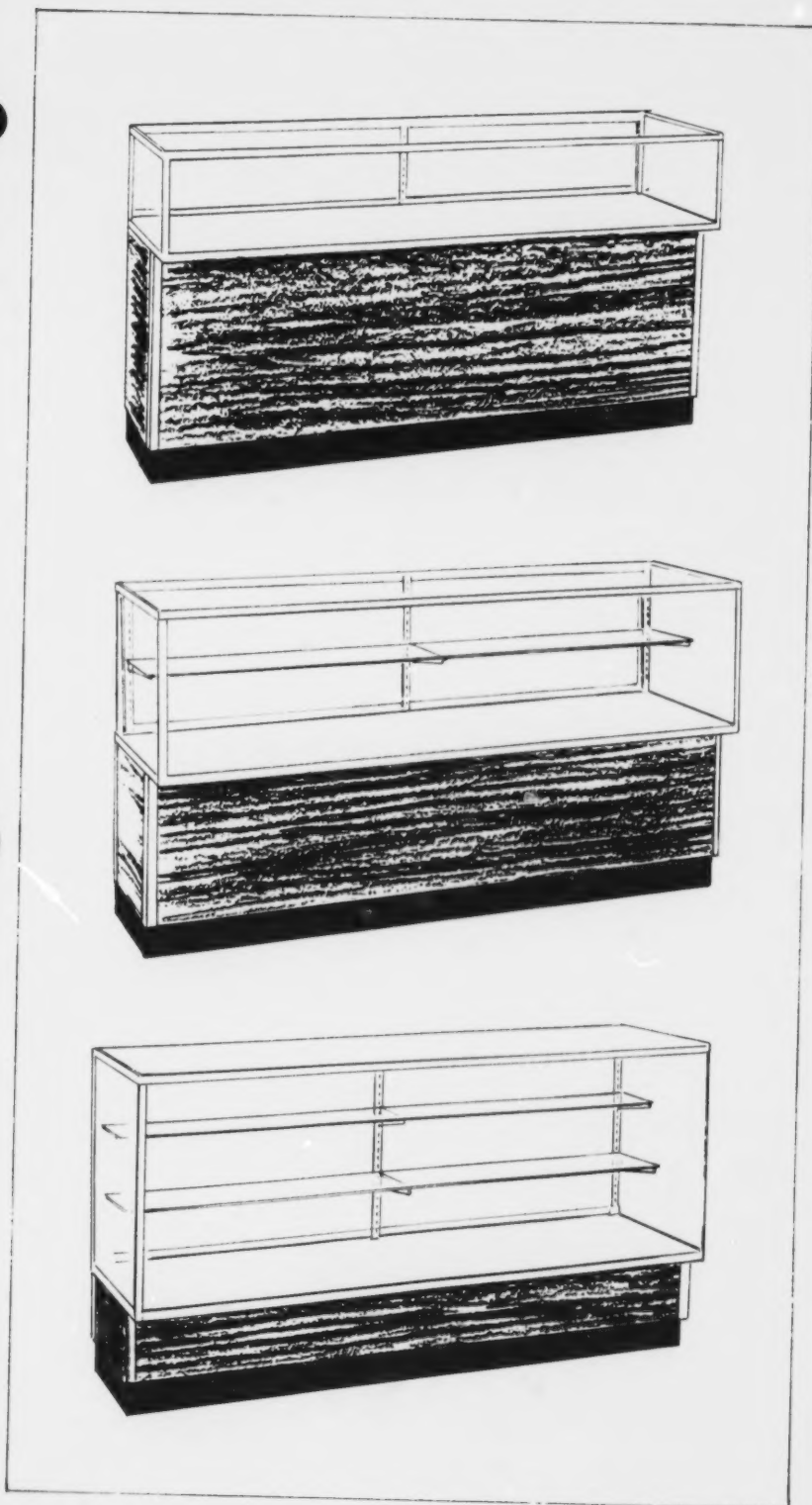


Figure 3. Showcases differ by the height of the visible area offered for merchandise display. The three common sizes are jewelry case, half-vision case, and full-vision case. An extra-vision case is also available. (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos and Co.)

store is designed, so that the fixtures fit in with the overall floor plan and flow of traffic.

The process of choosing fixtures may include a space planner or interior designer, as well as a manufacturer's representative. Many major fixture manufacturers, especially those who specialize in building custom fixtures, have consultants who work with store personnel to develop comprehensive fixturing plans.

Fixtures should be selected on a department-by-department basis according to the kind and amounts of merchandise sold in each department. In each case, it must be decided whether the fixtures should be built-in or freestanding units, whether they should be standard units or custom designs, and whether they will be for short-term or long-term use.

Built-in units must be custom-built and are therefore more expensive than most freestanding units. They also cannot be moved around or changed easily. Therefore, they should be selected for fixturing that the store expects to be able to use in one area for many years to come.

A custom design is usually more expensive than a standard unit, but it can be a good investment if the store has special needs that standard fixtures cannot meet. For example, if the architecture of a store features prominent, interestingly shaped interior columns around which merchandise will be displayed, it may be impossible to find standard units that fit around the columns exactly. Therefore, a custom design may be in order.

When selecting fixtures, the decision-maker must also keep in mind that some of the fixtures in the store will have long-term value, while others will be subject to change as new trends and ideas in fixturing are introduced. Costly built-in shelving, for example, usually has fairly long-term value, particularly if it is finished in a neutral color that will



Figure 4. Varied types of racks offer flexibility in displaying merchandise. (Scarf tree courtesy of Melvin S. Roos, Inc. Other drawings courtesy of the NU-ERA Group, Inc.)

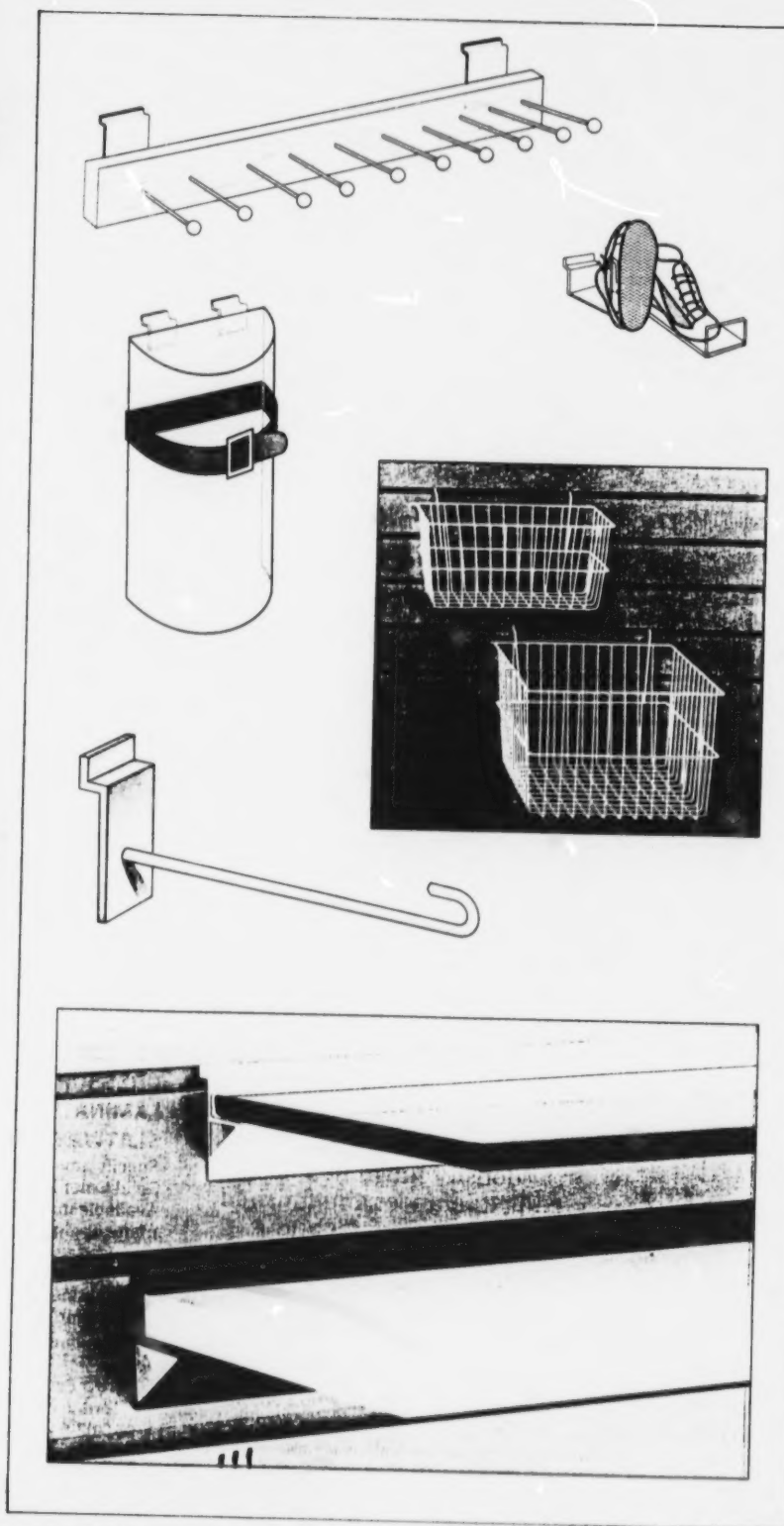


Figure 5. Slatwall is a popular way of making use of wall space to display many types of merchandise. Wire baskets, hooks, shelves, and other attachments can be used with slatwall. (Courtesy of the NU-ERA Group)

be compatible with any redecorating scheme the store might do. An inexpensive jewelry rack with a trendy lacquer finish, on the other hand, can simply be replaced with something more contemporary whenever public tastes change.

The Cost-Benefit Ratio

Cost is not the most important consideration in choosing fixtures, but the money spent on fixturing should always be balanced against the benefit gained.

1. *How long will it last, and how long will you keep it?* One good rule of thumb is that it makes sense to spend the most on the fixtures that will be used the longest. For example, if built-in glass shelving is the choice for a particular department, it might be reasonable to have the shelves made of Plexiglas or specially designed shatterproof glass, instead of ordinary, less expensive glass. If the store expects to use the built-in shelves for, say, ten years, it will probably be cheaper to spring for the more expensive material at the outset than to spend money each year replacing broken shelves.

2. *How much is your image worth?* When weighing cost against benefit, the benefit may be something abstract, such as store image. A store that sells mainly to wealthy customers may need to spend more on fixtures in order to get the benefit of maintaining its upscale image. It may be more important for such a store to invest in wood or brass instead of buying less expensive plastic or vinyl. Even so, the store can still do things to control costs, such as choosing less expensive wood veneers or sturdy wood laminates, rather than solid wood, and fixtures which are plated with brass or gold, rather than made of solid metal.



Figure 6. A vertical freestanding tower showcase. (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos & Co.)

3. *How hard will it work for you?* Versatility and flexibility are important benefits to weigh against the cost of fixturing. Tubular systems, for example, which are relatively low-cost items to begin with, are excellent values, because they can be used for many different purposes. They also save time, because they can be modified so quickly and easily.

Qualities to Look For in Fixturing

Fixtures should be well designed, well constructed, and easy to maintain. A *well-designed* fixture is attractive, but does not distract unnecessarily from the merchandise it is intended to display. A *well-constructed* fixture is made of a material that will stand up to daily wear and tear without breaking, and has a finish that will not peel off or chip easily. An *easy-to-maintain* fixture wipes clean easily and does not require frequent repainting or refinishing. Quality fixtures should meet all these standards.

Note: Plexiglas[®] is a registered trademark of Rohm and Haas Company.

Questions

1. List nine materials commonly used to manufacture fixtures.
2. List five types of standard units.
3. List two types of specialty units.
4. Name three decisions that must be made when choosing fixtures.
5. List three questions to ask

when weighing cost against benefit.

6. Name three qualities to look for in fixturing.
7. What are the components of a tubular system?
8. What is the ideal time to make decisions about fixture purchases?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantage of towers?
10. Why would a store consider purchasing custom fixtures?
11. What effect do long-term and short-term value have on fixture purchasing decisions?

Projects

Make appropriate reports after answering the questions or doing the research for one or more of the following projects.

1. Let's say you are planning to open a small specialty clothing store that will sell sweaters, socks, and winter jackets. What fixtures would you buy? Why?
2. Go to the men's and women's clothing departments in a department store, and list the different kinds of standard fixtures you see in one area of the store. Are there tables? If so, what are they used for? What about racks? How many kinds can you identify? Are there wall units? gondolas? showcases?
3. While you are still in the store, go back over the items on your list of standard fixtures from the previous project, and ask yourself (a) which different mate used in the fixtures and (b) any of the units you saw are built-in units.

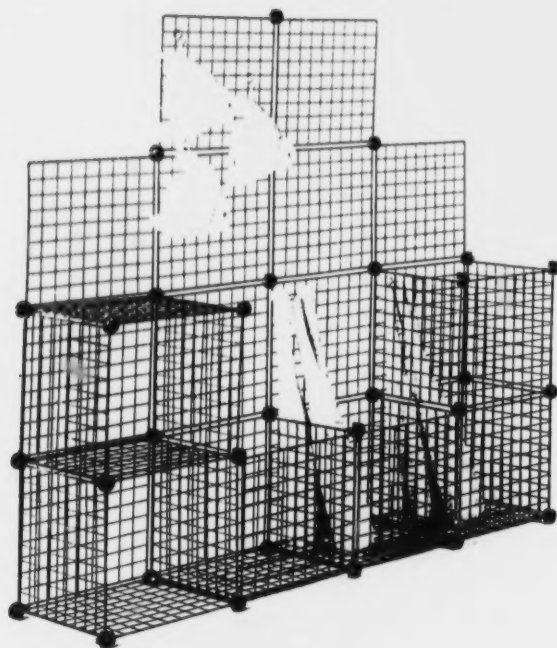


Figure 7. Mini-grid display cubes assemble easily with plastic connectors. The 14" by 14" wire panels are also plastic-coated. (Courtesy of the NU-ERA Group)

Elements of Window Display

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. tell when and where a window display is most effective;
2. give the main purposes of a window display;
3. list the advantages and disadvantages of an open-back window;
4. name the major advantages of the closed-back window;
5. list the elements of window design;
6. contrast unit and related groupings;
7. define color harmony, monochrome, and color contrast;
8. explain why signing is important in a display; and
9. tell how a window should be inspected when it is completed.

Window Displays Are Still Important

The one place where the display worker can be completely creative and practice a dramatic art form is the *display window*. In the 1950s, there were fewer display windows because retail stores moved to the shopping centers, and later to the shopping malls. Many stores discontinued window displays and converted them to extra floor selling space.

Who Needs a Window Display?

Downtown stores located where lots of people walk by them can still benefit from well-planned, creative, tastefully designed windows. This is very true in the large cities. But it's just as important in the small towns where major stores are located on "Main Street" or the town square. There is less need in suburban areas and branch stores because most shoppers arrive by car to the parking lot. They do not come in because they are induced by the window displays. The main factor in decid-

ing whether to use windows or not is the amount of passing pedestrian traffic.

Stores located in the vicinity of banks, theaters, office buildings, transportation stations, or areas where large numbers of people walk by should consider window displays. Many workers in downtown areas "window shop" for pleasure and diversion before and after work hours, and during lunch breaks.

Functions of Window Displays

A window display has two main purposes. It creates an image or atmosphere for the store, and it should produce sales. Both are important, but unless a window is designed to generate sales and customer traffic inside, it is non-productive. Windows should never be considered for pure decoration alone. They are too expensive for that.

While it is still one of the most exciting aspects of a display worker's efforts, window preparation is very exacting work. First, in only three seconds, a window display

must attract attention and state its message to the passerby. In contrast, an interior display has as much as 10 seconds to get its message across.¹

A window display usually has a theme or setting. It must be simple in design, yet have a powerful selling message. Most important, a window design and props should never overpower the merchandise. This is often a great temptation for creative people. Important elements are line, form, balance, color, and lighting. Display windows are always a challenge to the display worker's skills. And good design is always the key to a successful display.

Two Types of Windows

Many stores use an open-back window. This type opens up the inside of the store and lets the

¹Visual Merchandising. (New York: National Retail Merchants Association, 1976), p. 93.

customer see an array of merchandise from out on the sidewalk. Open-back windows also let in outside light, reducing the amount of inside light needed in the front. Some stores use a thin, open-meshed gauze screen over the window backs. This lets in light, but it offers some security for the merchandise in the window. Small children will climb in out of curiosity, and small items are tempting to the shoplifter.

Some open windows have a glass panel at the back both for protection and to help shield the intense heat generated by window lighting and sunlight. These place an unusual load on the air-conditioning equipment. Open-back windows are more difficult to decorate and design since the background is the entire store interior.

Props and themes must be simply presented. A minimum of merchandise should be used, with attention focused on only one or two elements. Mannequins and apparel forms are favored for fashion goods. Cubes and simple risers are good for hard line and giftware items. A few straightforward signs can be used. Decorations and banners tend to detract from the open-back window. But location and interior background will dictate what kinds of props can be most effective.

The closed-back window offers much better design possibilities and creative challenge. The display worker can control the elements and setting, including background and side panels. Many windows have movable back and side panels. So the actual interior dimensions can be reduced or increased as needed.

Side panels can be angled and used much like stage scenery and props in a theatre. Lighting and color can be created and controlled inside the window without interference from the store interior. Atmosphere, image, and focus are strictly in the hands of the display worker.

Elements of Window Display

You should not simply decorate a window. You should create a merchandise presentation. You can do this by carefully designing, planning, and installing a display. You must know the elements of design. These include *line, form, space, harmony, balance, contrast, color, and light*. This assignment alone cannot teach you everything about these elements. But if you know the basics, you can begin to work with them. And you can learn how to design, plan, and install an effective window display.

Creating the Design

A good window design begins with an idea that is transferred to paper in a series of sketches. These do not have to be elaborate works of art or accurate drawings. They are just quick, simple pencil sketches that begin the process of a complete design. Color is not important at this point. After the sketch has been worked out to your satisfaction, then use colored, felt-tipped pens to create the full visual impact.

Where do you get design ideas? Many sources of ideas are available to you. First, scan all types of retailing and merchandising trade publications. You should have access to or subscribe to trade magazines for display people. *Visual Merchandising* is a good example.

Advertising in all types of media gives you creative ideas for display. Observe other stores' window designs. Start a file of pictures on various subjects for creative ideas. Work up sketches from things you see, even though you may not need them right away. Designs and ideas are everywhere. They are in nature and constantly surround you. If you will become aware of what to look for, you will find design ideas everywhere, and they are free or inexpensive.

Many windows are created for a

specific theme. Back-to-school, travel and vacation time, bridal, graduation, and of course, the traditional holidays are just a few examples. Themes may be for a particular season, current events, civic events, storewide promotions, or tie-in promotions with some other event of local interest. A theme may be a color or a pattern. A theme is almost anything that can be developed in a window design.

Arranging Elements

A part of your original sketches may include a floor plan of the window. This is often useful. But it is not always necessary unless you are letting someone else install the window display. A floor plan helps establish distances between properties. And it ensures that they are properly positioned to achieve the effect you want. A floor plan is a great help if you have a window with a deep interior space that is difficult to fill, or a corner window with multiple viewing angles.

Grouping is basic to good arrangement. Unless your window has a single focal element, such as a single mannequin, then you must group several elements into a pleasing arrangement (see fig. 1).

Remember that the human eye is very discriminating. It will be attracted to certain patterns and will be repelled by others. Many people are unaware of what the eyes want to see or want to reject.

Usually, people look for harmony, contrast, quietness, beauty, and pleasant objects or forms. They will reject discord, or disturbing, unbalanced arrangements. Therefore, the manner in which you group items has much to do with the strength and attention-getting power of your design.

Grouping follows three separate patterns called *unit, related, or mass* display. Since mass displays are seldom used in windows nowadays, think about either a unit or related type of arrangement.



Figure 1. Use of a mirrored back panel doubles the image and shows the back of the fashions in display. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

1. *Unit grouping* arranges elements into compact masses. Each unit should be easily identified and seen alone. In figure 1 there are two units. Each mannequin displays a different ensemble. The eye registers both figures at once, but will settle on the most interesting one.

In this example, a mirrored background doubles the image, and the eye sees four figures rather than one or two. The mirror enlarges the background and the display. But it also reinforces the particular ensemble that the indi-

vidual is interested in seeing. The mirror also presents the back side of the ensemble so that the viewer gets a full-dimensional view, which is quite unusual. The potted plant in the foreground adds only interest and contrasting texture and color.

There is another interesting aspect to this display. The lighting from the interior and overhead track lights creates patterns on the wall that intensify the design and add interest through repetition of form. Mirrors are great devices for use as window backgrounds.

2. *Related grouping* may display several items together to form a single theme that the eye sees as a single unit. For example, a hardware window may have as a central feature a table saw with a male mannequin behind it dressed in work clothing. On the floor may be a grouping of a power drill, drill bits, and a toolbox with assorted small tools and hardware. Another group may feature a router and its various accessories. All of these items and objects are related to each other. Yet each has its own areas of specific interest.

Figure 2 is another example of related grouping of a different nature. The display shows two fashion ensembles that are completely different. Yet, the two mannequins are tied together by the sofa and the small rug. The customer may be interested in the sofa, the rug, or either of the two ensembles. However, the eye sees the entire grouping and puts them together into a related whole.

Line and space are important to design. The eye travels in a pattern. It will seldom stay on a single object for more than a second or two. The eye will probably take in the entire window design at once. It will select an object of interest and then move up, down, in a diagonal, or in a sweeping circle. What causes the eye to move about is the way in which elements are arranged, by colors, by patterns, or by strong contrasts.

These are the lines and spaces created by the elements of the display. In figure 3, you will note that the design elements form a pyramid or triangular shape. The arms of the female mannequin on the right create an angle, leading the eye to the top form. The same thing is true of the torso form on the left. The arms point toward the top. The store logo at the bottom creates the base of the pyramid.

Another interesting point should be noted. If the display artist had not used a spotlight on the right- and left-hand figures, they would be lost. You would be look-



Figure 2. The two figures are related, even though their ensembles are different. They are tied together by the sofa and small rug, making them a coordinated unit. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

ing at the topmost crest because both mannequin's arms are pointing to it. Because of *lighting*, your attention is called to the coats rather than the props. Overall, it is a closely unified design. The eye is led from one item to the next in a very pleasing arrangement.

Figure 4 shows an arrangement that forms a circular pattern. The eye sees everything on the tabletop at once because all items are arranged in a unified, circular pattern. The theme is carried out by coordinating all of the accessory items to the seashell pattern on the dinnerware.

Repetition of line, shape, and space is a strong element of design. This is clearly illustrated in figure 5. Notice how the geometric pattern of the bedspread, sheets, and pillowcases is repeated and strengthened by the back wall panel. The display artist wanted to emphasize the classical lines of the coordinated bed linen set.

To carry out the theme and repeat the dominant patterns, the columns, urns, and wall painting were selected. To draw attention to the theme set, a raised platform

elevates the display only about 12 inches off the floor. This is low enough to be seen entirely, yet high enough to call it to the shopper's attention.

Color is the other important design element. Color can be very quiet and subdued or it can be wild, splashy, and dominating. Because color is so important in design, you must use it wisely and with good taste. Color can be the theme of a window display, particularly in fashion apparel, home furnishings, and most soft line merchandise. It can be used for harmony, contrast, or emphasis.

Good display design requires that you study color until you become competent in analyzing and making it work for you. You can find many uses of color in your display designs.

1. Use *harmonizing colors* with your merchandise. On the color chart (see fig. 6), you will see that a single hue (red, for example) can be mixed with the three neutrals of black, white, or gray. These neutrals help form tints, tones, and shades of the pure color. They always support and harmonize in a very pleasing color combination.

2. *Monochrome* (MON o krome), which means single color, can be used for a very dramatic effect. In monochrome, you can mix tints, tones, and shades of the same color. Or you can use adjacent hues from the color wheel. For example, green, yellow-green, and blue-green mix very well, and keep a monochrome effect.

3. *Contrasting colors* come from opposite sides of the color wheel. However, you must use them in the right amounts. If yellow is your dominant color and you want a strong contrast for accent, you would use any of the violet shades. But they would be used only as accents and in small amounts. Otherwise, the two will "fight" each other for attention.

You must be careful about placing contrasting colors next to each other or superimposing one over the other. For example, blue on orange, red on green, and violet on yellow can have a negative effect of cancelling each other out. However, if carefully used, you can achieve a strong, bold look that works very well.

Color in lighting can follow these same rules. You must make



Figure 3. An arrangement that forms a pyramid design



Figure 4. A circular pattern permits all display elements to be seen at once. The other interest is the coordinated seashell pattern carried throughout. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

certain that spots and floodlights in windows are not the wrong tint. You will cause color to "wash" away by mixing contrasting shades and tones. More information on this is found in the assignment on lighting.

Color creates atmosphere and distance. Color hues ranging from red to yellow are "warm" and tend to advance toward you. Hues of green through violet are "cool" and tend to recede. Cool, dark colors are favored for backgrounds because they create the illusion of space, make the merchandise advance toward the viewer, and create contrast. Flooring is usually a neutral shade of gray or gray-beige.

Keep colors simple in window displays. You do not want to use too many. It is best to have one dominant hue in the merchandise, with harmonizing or contrasting accents in accessories. Props and fixtures should always blend into the background or offer good contrast or harmony with the merchandise.

Signing

A window or any other type of display has a message. The merchandise along with appropriate props and arrangements tell much of the story, but it is not complete without signing. Signing can be used in several different ways. Some rules on signing should never be broken.

Somewhere in the window the store name or logo should appear. It is essential that the viewer knows whose store window has the display. Usually, if a theme is used, the signing will carry a part of the message of that theme. This is not always necessary, but it is common practice. In most stores, it is necessary to identify each featured item of merchandise in the display, along with price, department, or location. Sometimes a brief description of the featured merchandise appears on the sign, including material, features, or perhaps one or more benefits.

Final Inspection

Regardless of how well your origi-

nal plan appears on paper, check it again. Once a display window is installed, make some important final inspections.

First, the window display, including merchandise, props, signing, floor, back and side panels, as well as the glass, must be absolutely clean! Nothing ruins an attractive display more than dust, lint, spider webs in corners, dead insects, and fingerprints on the inside or outside of the glass. Dirty handprints or smudges on the mannequin can spoil a tastefully chosen ensemble.

Second, check the display from the outside. Look at it as if you are seeing it for the first time. It is good practice to walk past the window from a distance. See if the window attracts your attention. Look at it critically, rather than with admiration. Look for minor flaws and pieces that are out of place or out of balance. See if your groupings are correct and if they move the eye as you had planned.

Third, carefully check the merchandise. A fashion window is a disaster if there are wrinkles, sags, and lint or dirt on the garments. Make sure there are no pins, wires, or padding showing. Look at the accessories, too. On mannequins



Figure 5. Repetition of line, pattern, and theme is used to emphasize the classical shapes and beauty of the bed linens.

Primary hues:

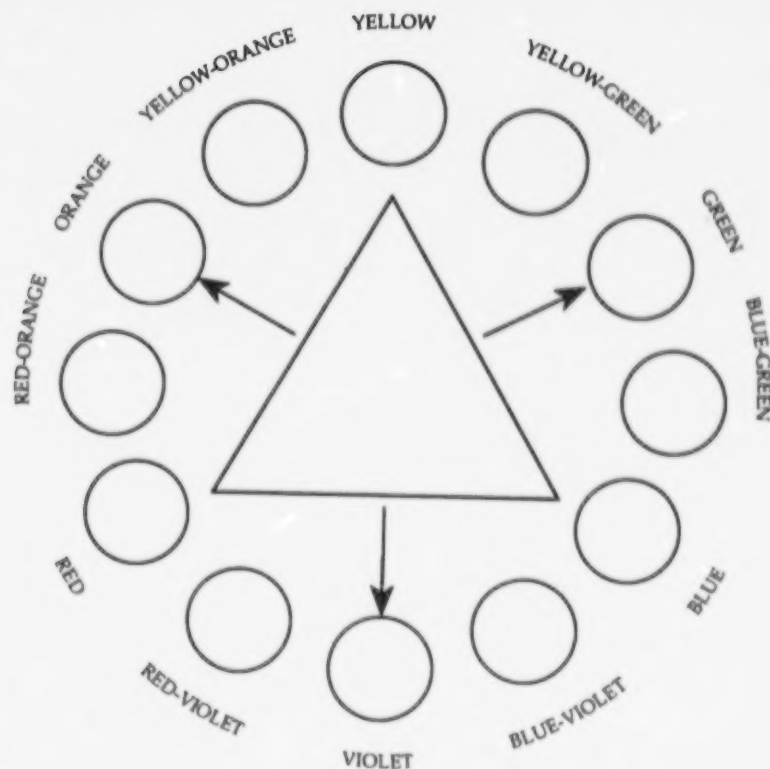
Red, yellow, blue

Secondary hues:

Green, violet, orange

Tertiary hues:

Yellow-green, blue-green,
blue-violet, red-violet,
red-orange, yellow-orange



Black, white, and gray are neutrals. A single color can vary when one of these neutrals is added.

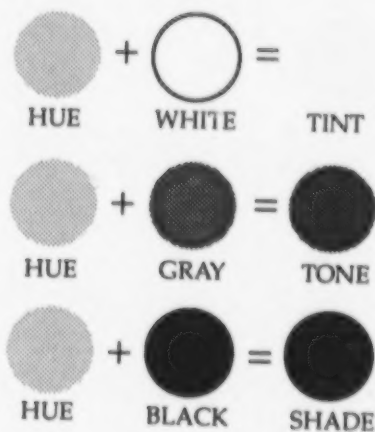


Figure 6

with separate wigs, check to see that they are on straight. Check that the legs and arms are correctly positioned. All other props, signs, and decorative effects should be in the right place and as they were designed.

Fourth, does the message come across clearly? Does the presentation say what you intended? Is the merchandise prominent? Will it attract attention and create excitement for the merchandise? Does it reflect the image that your store wants to convey? Is it inviting, and does it make you want to step inside?

Questions

1. In what kinds of stores are display windows most effective?
2. What two main purposes does a window display serve?
3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of an open-back display window?

4. What are the major advantages of a closed-back window display?
5. Name the elements of design.
6. Where can you get ideas for display windows?
7. How are themes used in window displays?
8. Contrast *unit* and *related grouping* of elements.
9. How are *line* and *space* created in a display?
10. Briefly discuss *repetition* as an element of design.
11. How is a *harmonizing color scheme* created?
12. How is a *monochrome effect* achieved?
13. What are *color contrasts*?
14. What essential elements of signing should be in a display window?
15. What are the four final inspection steps that should be made for a display?

Project

Select a single item of merchandise or a group of related items. These may be either hard lines or soft lines. They may be from your training station or from some other source. First, prepare a theme for a window display. The theme can be anything you choose. Next, prepare a sketch of a window design, showing the arrangement of elements, merchandise, props, and signing. Make either a unit or a related grouping.

Use one of the window designs shown in the assignment for an idea if you cannot think of one. Have your training sponsor evaluate your design or help with the development if you have difficulty. Attach the design to your assignment.

8

Point-of-Sale Merchandising

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. *define point-of-sale (POS) merchandising, and tell what purposes it serves;*
2. *describe the kinds of props used in POS merchandising of fashion goods;*
3. *tell how special packaging designs aid in POS merchandising;*
4. *name four other uses for POS merchandising; and*
5. *relate the role of display in POS merchandising and how it is used in special shops and boutiques.*

Terms to Know

boutique (boo TEEK)—a small shop within a store or department, usually for fashion merchandise. It can be used for any kind of merchandise that is special or unusual in nature.

decor (day KORE)—the style and layout of furnishings to create a special look for a particular theme, style, or period.

impulse buying—buying items on the spur of the moment, unplanned; seeing something on display and buying because it is new, unusual, or suggests a need.

logo (LOW go)—an abbreviation for logotype, it is an identifying sign of a product name, store name, or brand name; the style of type and design of a name.

strategy (STRAT uh gee)—a plan to accomplish a stated goal. In merchandising, it is the particular plan for selling a product or line of products. Point-of-sale merchandising is a strategy.

Point-of-Sale Merchandising

In the past, a store attempted to tie displays to merchandise by constructing what was known as "interior" displays. These were located at strategic points within the store, but were not necessarily close to the merchandise. Attempts were made to tie the window displays with those on the inside, particularly for special events and promotions. Today's emphasis is called "point-of-sale" or "point-of-purchase." You will see these abbreviated in marketing and merchandising as POS or POP. They mean the same thing.

Point-of-sale merchandising is the art of putting merchandise and their displays at the place of purchase, or where the customer makes a selection. In other words, the merchandise is made accessible to the customer for self-selection or selection with the aid of a salesperson. Most of the principles of self-selection apply here. This assignment discusses methods of displaying or arranging merchandise for customer selection.

Purpose of POS Displays

The purpose of point-of-sale display is to make the merchandise attractive, to get the customers' attention, and to show the merchandise as it is used or in its most attractive form.

To accomplish this purpose, displays must have a simple design, use a minimum of props and decoration, and use signing to aid the customer in making a buying decision.

Figure 1 is an excellent example of a POS display. The dressed mannequin is on top of the fixture that holds the merchandise. In this example, two stepladders and a curtain rod have been used. The mannequin shows the customer how the featured ensemble looks when items are worn together. The same merchandise is available below for selection, including related accessories. The main objective is that the display is at the point-of-sale. Its purpose is to attract attention and make the merchandise look attractive, as it would appear in actual use.

To be effective, a POS display must invite customer selection on

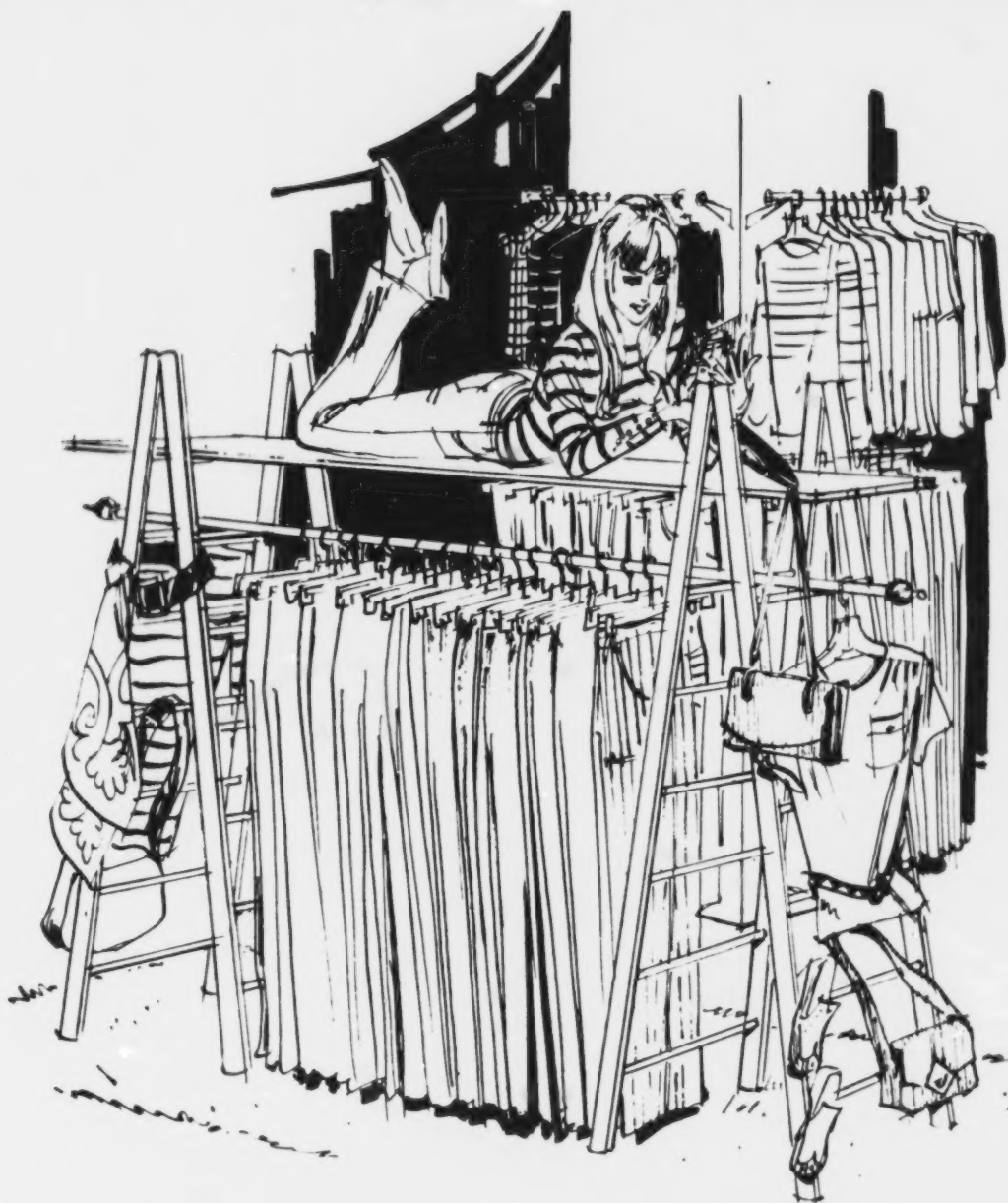


Figure 1. A point-of-purchase display (Courtesy May Company, Los Angeles, California)

the moment. It must do a good job of preselling. At least, it should interest customers enough to seek a salesperson's assistance in making the selection.

POS display can be used effectively with both hard line and soft line or fashion goods. Supermarkets, for example, have made very effective use of POS display for many years. Figure 2 illustrates a common type of POS display used

in mass merchandising. The signing and artwork attract attention and give the brief selling points. The merchandise is at waist level and is readily available. You do not have to go somewhere else to make the selection.

Display Props

In fashion merchandising, it is desirable to use single mannequins or

forms for POS display. Torso forms, half-mannequins, blouse displayers, bust forms, and shirt boards are popular types of props. The smaller tubular or merchandise rack forms are versatile merchandise props.

To place these forms at eye level or slightly above, the display worker uses *risers*, *cubes*, and other similar props. These are usually quite simple in design and

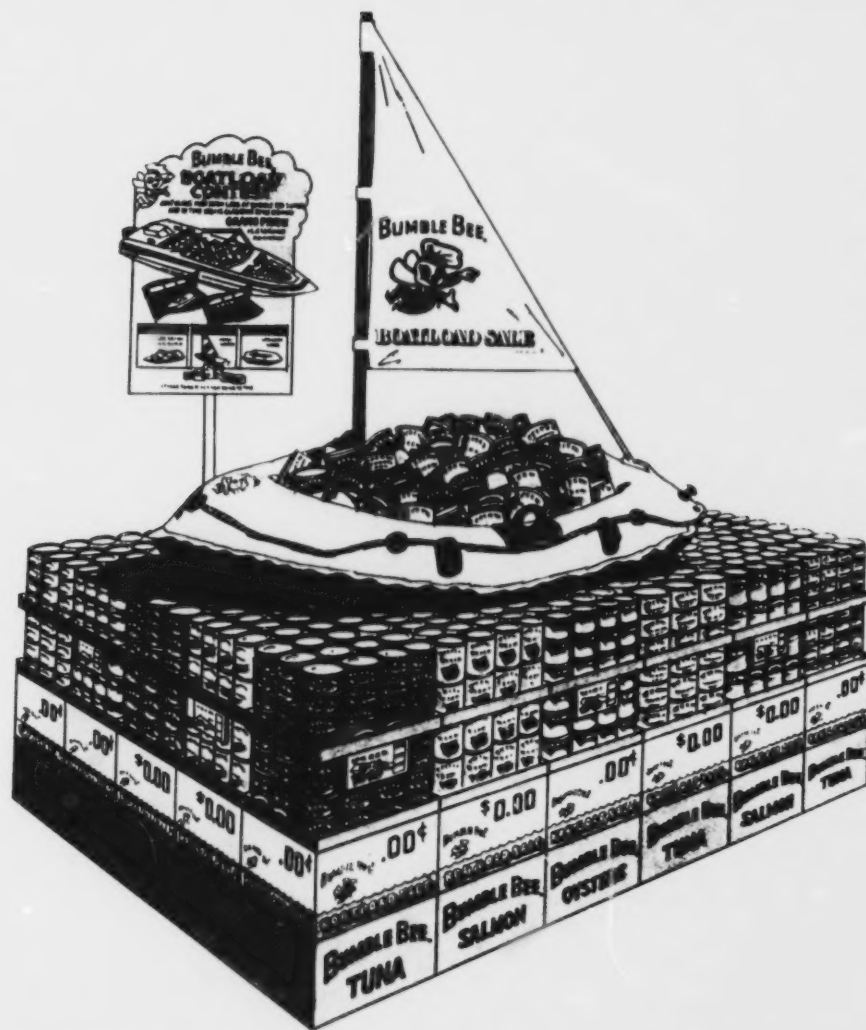


Figure 2. Example of point-of-sale display in supermarkets and mass merchandising (Courtesy *Progressive Grocer Magazine*)

color. Their main purpose is to support the merchandise and make it attractive.

Manufacturers often design and make available POS displays and signing materials. They reason that if these are colorful, easy-to-assemble and set up, and inexpensive, the retailer will probably use them. Manufacturer-produced materials also give a look of uniformity to their products from one retail store to another. Figure 3 is an example of an attractive, colorful POS display for cosmetic and toiletry products. The props are simple paper drums covered with a wrapper, especially designed with

the name or logo. A touch of inexpensive rope adds color harmony and flair. Note the simplicity of the props. Yet they effectively display the products, making them attractive and easy to reach.

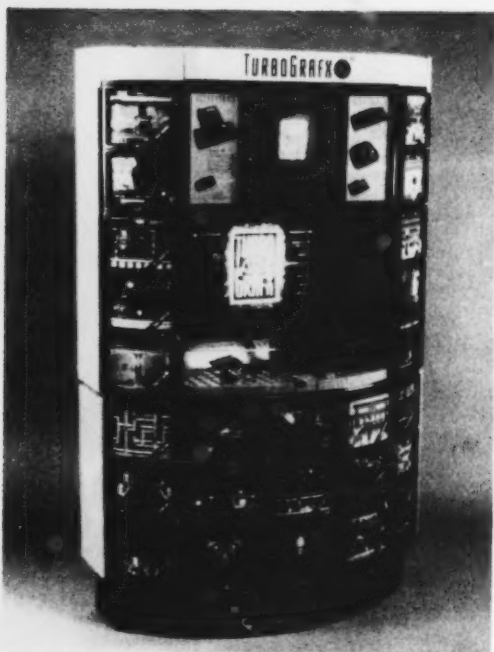
Figure 4 shows an effective display of shoes in a shoe department. Risers are used to keep the shoes at the right level for easy selection. They are displayed with the idea that the customer can pick up the shoe, examine it, and make a buying decision.

Note that the signing is nearby and gives the shopper extra information, including price. In this POS display, the customer is in the

shoe department where seats invite sitting down for fitting and final selection. For security reasons, only one shoe of a pair is on display.

Packaging as a POS Aid

Hard line items are more difficult to make into an attractive display. Generally, fashion goods and soft lines are more colorful objects and lend themselves to easy self-selection. To make up for the rather unglamorous nature of many hard line products, manufacturers have designed bright, colorful cartons and packaging. The main object is



With this display it was possible for holiday crowds to actually experience playing a TurboGrafx 16 video game. It features both hardware and software. RTC Industries of Chicago designed a four-unit system of displays for NEC Technologies.



Figure 3. Cosmetics display used shades of purple in an attractive color theme.

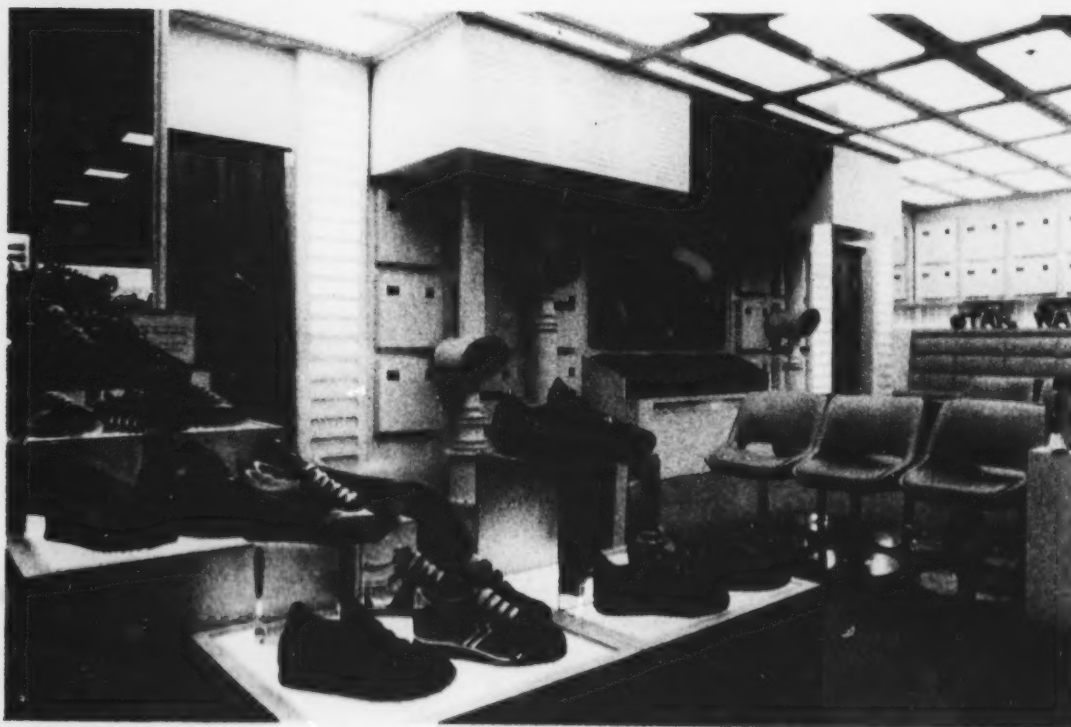


Figure 4. Yellow and white were combined here to produce a startling effect in a children's shoe department.

to provide an attractive base or riser for POS merchandising.

For electric housewares and home entertainment equipment, attractive packaging has been designed for POS displays. The cartons are displaying on shelving and island displays or gondolas. One model is often removed and set on top of a carton. It has the appropriate signing and price information. Stacked cartons invite the customer to make a selection and take it to the cashier or check-out counter.

Many hardware, tool, and plumbing products are designed for the do-it-yourself (DIY) market. To help sell their products at POS displays, the manufacturers have printed step-by-step instructions on the side panels or backs of cartons. Not only are the cartons bright, colorful, and attractively designed, but the sales information is put right on the box itself. This practice almost eliminates the need for extra signs. At least, it keeps additional sign requirements to a minimum.

Figure 5 illustrates this type of POS display. Figure 6 shows a POS display of wine glass sets. The cartons have all the descriptions and information. The glasses setting atop the cartons allow the customer to see and examine the pattern, clarity of glass, and weight. There is no need to open the cartons in order to make a selection.

Small items were once merchandised by placing them loose in bins or compartments on tops of counters and tables. This practice has almost been discontinued because the merchandise itself is not attractive or inviting for purchase. Small items today have been placed inside individual packages that have essential sales information printed on them. These are hung on pegboard hooks or special merchandisers built to display them. These units take up little room, hold large amounts of goods in a wide variety of color and style choices, and are visually pleasing.



Figure 5. Use carton designs for POS display. (Courtesy Home Center Magazine)

Uses of Point-of-Sale Merchandising

Outside of making merchandise attractive and available to the customer, POS merchandising has other uses. Because POS is so versatile and dynamic, it is the single most important merchandising medium in retailing today.

1. *POS greatly increases impulse buying.* Attractive packaging, hang tags, and signing create impulse buying. Customers walking down main aisles and traffic areas are attracted by displays and packaging, or by the models on display. Once they stop, inspect the products, and read the point-of-sale copy, they are induced to buy on impulse. These kinds of displays are most effective around checkout counters and exits as well as the departments where the products are normally found.

2. *POS increases buying through related grouping of products.* Figure 7 illustrates this type

of display. All the tennis gear and accessory items are grouped on one display unit. A customer may come in to purchase a can of tennis balls. But the related item display invites extra purchases of other needed items.

These styles of merchandiser fixtures are highly versatile and adaptable. They can be converted to show many different kinds of merchandise. Notice how pegboard hooks on the end panels display tennis rackets and related accessories.

3. *POS is excellent for showing featured, seasonal, and advertised specials.* By placing special fixtures in prominent locations, POS merchandising calls attention to seasonal products, advertised specials, or promotional items. Special sale signs help move these products because many customers do not see or remember the advertising.

Even when they come in because of advertising, it is good

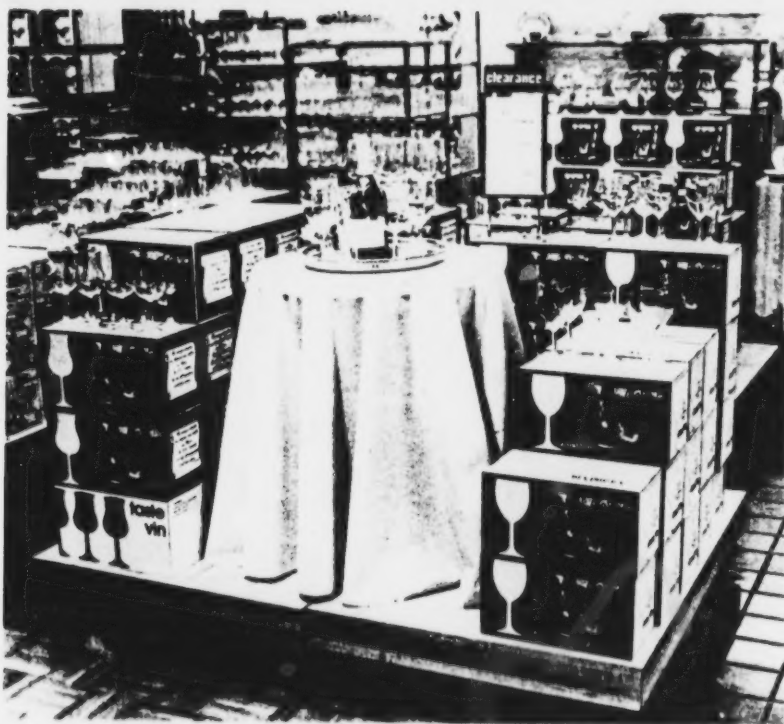


Figure 6. Package designs help sell merchandise. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

merchandising to have these specials in a highly visible location. It makes for easier shopping and induces the customer to shop for other products.

4. POS is excellent for suggesting new products or additional uses for standard products. Shoppers are always on the lookout for the new and unusual. They are attracted to products that are either new or suggest new uses. Figure 8 shows a display for creating swag lamps. The pictures on the top valance show various places in the home where swag lamps are useful for changing the home decor. Two assembled models show the customer what they look like when put together. The parts are pre-packaged and easily selected.

Figure 9 is a display rack for rolls of woven cane, useful in furniture repair and redecorating. The panel shows its many uses. A brochure rack on the side gives illustrations and instructions for its use. Both of these POS displays prompt new ideas for older products. Buying is encouraged

through the creative ideas provided.

Trends in Point-of-Sale Merchandising

Today's store is planned and laid out to accommodate POS merchandising and fixturing. Store planners, consultants, architects, and visual merchandisers work together to achieve the desired floor plan and visual impact.

The key to successful merchandising is always the same. This is the amount of profit that can be turned on investment. Retailing is more competitive than ever. The retailer who succeeds and remains in business is the one that can operate most profitably.

Role of Display

Display plays a major role in POS merchandising. Display helps create visual impact. Layout and de-

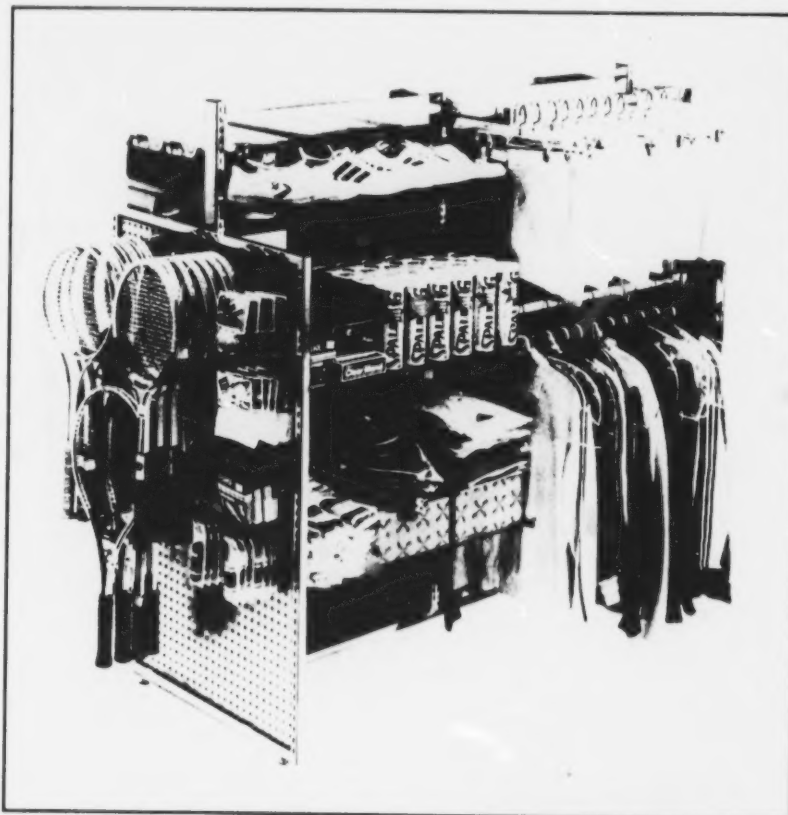


Figure 7. Related grouping creates additional sales with POS displays. (Courtesy Kason Fixture-Ware, Binghamton, N.Y., and Sports Retailer Magazine)



Figure 8. (Courtesy Home Center Magazine)

sign are also important. But if display does not do its job correctly, these carefully conceived plans will be of little value.

Display must select the right fixtures, install the right accessories for maximum merchandising, and set fixtures in the proper locations for best traffic. Display is responsible for using packaging, hang tags, and signing to help POS do its job.

Display is responsible for grouping related products and accessories. End panels and platforms must be used to create attention-getting displays. Display workers must coordinate merchandise with special promotions, advertising, and seasonal events. Spot and floodlights are used to dramatize certain POS fixtures. Display's final achievement is to create sales in a given amount of space. Unless display fulfills its role in POS merchandising, the profits won't be generated that keep the store operating.

Role of Shops and Special Areas

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, special shops and boutiques became popular with many stores, mainly department stores. These are special areas for select merchandise within a department. Fashion merchandise, either wearing apparel or home furnishings, is

featured in them. In this category are the "bed and bath" shops, "lawn and patio" shops, and "poolside" shops, as examples.

Designer series apparel and its continuing popularity make setting up shops or boutiques a viable merchandising strategy. Display and POS merchandising play a big role in setting up the shop and giving it a distinctive look. For example, a shop may be set aside for a single designer name, such as Gloria Vanderbilt, Jordache, Halston, Pierre Cardin, or Oscar de la Renta. A "Prep Shop" may feature nothing but Izod sportswear.

In these examples, display and merchandise management work together to establish a special area within a department or several departments to gather all designer labels in one place. It gives prestige to the merchandise, makes shopping easier, and creates a special atmosphere for select merchandise (see fig. 10).

These shops and boutiques require a flexible fixturing system that makes changeovers fairly easy and inexpensive. Special shop names must be established. This usually requires an elaborate type

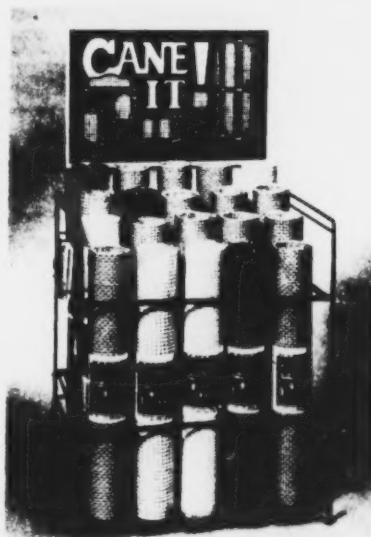


Figure 9. (Courtesy Home Center Magazine)



Figure 10. A graphic wall panel establishes a special area within a store. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

for signing. Grillwork, fancy peeling, special lighting, and other effects can set these areas aside. Displays should also be slightly more elaborate and decorative than in other areas. Special lighting effects are good and rather inexpensive to install. The best mannequins and props are needed. Displays should look like a "designer series," or at least have more than ordinary fashion appeal. Some prefer to set up miniwindow displays or create display nooks to show off the featured merchandise.

While shops and boutiques are not as prominent in many stores, their function remains. The need will continue to have special areas, show high-fashion goods, and create unique merchandising plans. Customers always want something new and creative. They do not enjoy shopping in the same atmosphere, surrounded by the same merchandise all the time. For this reason, stores must still come up with new ways to merchandise and make shopping an exciting event.

Questions

1. Define *point-of-sale merchandising*.
2. What is the purpose of POS merchandising?
3. What makes POS merchandising effective?
4. What props are best for POS displays of fashion merchandise?
5. Describe manufacturer-produced POS props.
6. Briefly describe how package designs are useful in POS displays.
7. Name four other uses of POS merchandising.
8. What is display's role in POS merchandising?

9. Describe the role of display in special shops and boutiques.

Projects

(Select one)

1. From your training station, select a special shop or boutique. Carefully observe the way in which the shop is merchandised and what displays are installed. How is the shop arranged, and how is it set aside as different from the rest of the department? Prepare a floor plan sketch that shows the approximate location of fixtures and merchandise groups. If possible, make a sketch of the shop itself. Show the special signing or logo that identifies it.

2. From your training station, select a hard line item that is packaged in an attractive carton. Make a sketch of a POS display of these cartons, or design a display of your own. This should include the signing, as well as any other display props that you think would enhance the display.
3. From your training station, select a soft line item. Prepare a sketch that shows one of the POS displays. Or design a POS display of your own, showing props, fixtures, and related grouping.

Refer to illustrations in this assignment for ideas. Attach the project to this assignment.

9

Effective Use of Lighting

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. name the two purposes of lighting in the retail environment;
2. list the three types of lighting;
3. list five types of incandescent lamps and three types of HID lamps;
4. name the three qualities that make a lighting fixture versatile;
5. name two disadvantages of HID lighting;
6. state which two of the three types of lighting are suitable for accent lighting; and
7. name two purposes for which automated lighting controls could be used.

Terms to Know

aesthetic—(adj.) referring to the sense of what is beautiful or attractive.

computer-controlled automation—a process in which computers are used to command a system to perform certain functions automatically.

current—(n.) the movement or flow of electricity.

cylindrical—shaped like a cylinder, which is an object that is circular with a flat top and bottom.

filament (FILL-uh-ment)—a very fine thread or threadlike structure used as a conductor in a light bulb.

fluoride (FLOOR-ide)—a chemical compound used to coat the tubes in which fluorescent lighting is created.

mercury vapor lamp—a lamp producing a light by means of an electric arc in mercury vapor.

phosphorous—a nonmetallic element used to coat bulbs for HID lighting.

quartz—a mineral, a form of which can be used to create the type of incandescent lighting known as quartz-halogen.

recessed—placed inside an outer surface, hidden from view, or away from the immediate surface area.

wattage—measurement of electrical power in watts, which are units of power.

Purposes of Lighting in the Retail Environment

Lighting in the retail environment has two distinct purposes. First, it provides general lighting of the merchandise in a store. Second, it focuses attention on specific merchandise in displays. Many different types of lighting are available to achieve these two very different purposes.

This assignment will introduce you to the different types of lighting, then explain how they are used to achieve each of the purposes described in the preceding paragraph.

Technical Basics: Types of Lighting, Lamps, and Fixtures

The Three Types of Lighting

Lighting can be divided into three main types: incandescent, fluorescent, and high-intensity discharge. Each has many different uses, and you have probably come across examples of all three in your daily life.

In the retail environment, all three types of lighting can be used

Some information in this section was taken from Douglas Baker, "Know Thy Light," *Visual Merchandising* magazine, February 1981.)

to create different effects. Later in this chapter, you will learn specific ways to use these different types of lighting in store displays. Before that, however, you should become familiar with the basic characteristics of each type.

Incandescent light is the original form of artificial light, the type that is created when an electrical current passes through a filament in a light bulb. Commonly used in household fixtures, such as lamps and overhead lights, it tends to be much hotter and to consume more energy than other types of lighting. Because it creates so much heat, which makes it expensive, it is rarely used to provide general lighting of very large areas.

Fluorescent light is a cooler, more energy-efficient type of light, easily recognized by its long, slender, tubular bulbs. Fluorescent light is created when electrical current collides with mercury vapor inside a glass tube, then passes through a fluoride element that coats the tube. Because fluorescent light does not create as much heat as incandescent light, it is popular in offices, stores, and other large environments that require a constant source of general light.

High-intensity discharge (HID) light is the newest and most energy-efficient type of lighting available. It is created when electrical energy reacts with a phosphorous coating on a glass bulb. HID light provides maximum illumination at the lowest energy use, and it is therefore the most economical type of lighting. This is the type of light in the "mercury vapor" lamps that are now frequently used to provide street lighting along interstate highways. Indoors, HID lighting shines so brilliantly that it must often be combined with other types of lighting to "soften" its effects.

Basic Types of Lamps

In commercial lighting, the term *lamp* refers not to one of those decorative lighting fixtures typically found in the home, but to the bulb in a commercial lighting fixture. There are many different kinds of lamps used for lighting retail environments; the major ones are described here.

The five lamps described in this paragraph are all incandescent lamps. *A-type* lamps are standard, rounded bulbs with a screw base, used for general-purpose lighting. *R-type* lamps are bell-shaped bulbs, with a nearly flat lower end (fig. 1), that can be used to scatter light over a wide circle, a process known as flooding, or floodlighting, or to concentrate light in a small area, in a process known as spotlighting. *ER-type* lamps are R-type lamps used only for floodlighting. *PAR-type* (fig. 2) are higher-intensity R-type lamps used mainly for spotlighting. *Tungsten-halogen*, or quartz, lamps are general-purpose bulbs that use less energy than the other types of incandescent bulbs described here.

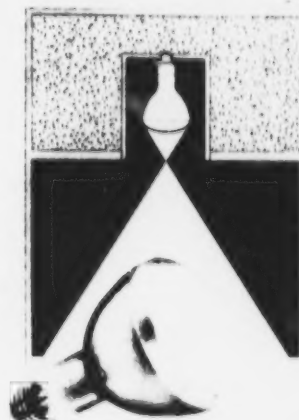


Figure 1. R-type lamp (Courtesy of *Visual Merchandising* magazine)

Fluorescent tubes (fig. 3) are long, slender, tube-shaped lamps

for fluorescent light. They are commonly used as sources of overhead light for large general areas.

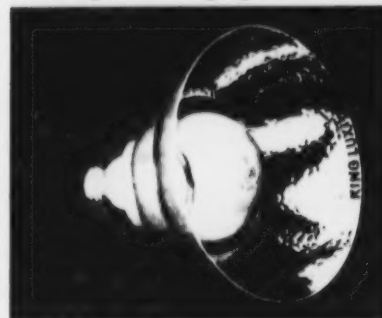


Figure 2. PAR-type (Courtesy of *Visual Merchandising* magazine)

The last three lamps are *metal halide*, *high-pressure sodium*, and *mercury vapor* lamps, all of which are small bulbs used for HID lighting. HID lamps shine a brighter light, produce less heat, and use less electrical energy than incandescent lamps. They are more expensive than incandescents, but they make up the cost difference by offering more light for the energy used.

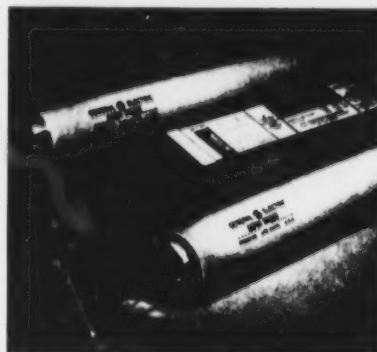


Figure 3. Fluorescent lamps (Courtesy of *Visual Merchandising* magazine)

Commercial lamps, like household light bulbs, come in different wattages, for different degrees of brightness. The higher the wattage, the brighter the light. For example, a 50-watt bulb or lamp will not shine nearly as intensely as a 750-watt bulb. The choice of wattage to use depends on

the purpose for which the lighting will be used and on the particular effect the user wishes to achieve.

Basic Types of Fixtures

Now that we have reviewed the different types of lighting and lamps, we can go over the physical fixtures that house these lamps.

A fixture is an actual physical structure into which a lamp fits, and it serves three important purposes. First, it provides a safe, heavy-duty housing for the lamp, which would otherwise be too hot to handle. Second, it creates a means by which the lamp can be kept in place on a wall, ceiling, floor, or other area. Third, it can be used in accent lighting to focus a beam of light from the lamp on a specific object or area.

PAR fixtures make up the greatest portion of display lighting. They house PAR lamps, the incandescent lights that are used primarily for accenting specific items and areas. In addition, they can also be used to house some of the more energy-efficient HID lamps.

One of the most popular lighting choices in visual merchandising today is the low-voltage PAR lamp-and-fixture combination known as the *baby pin spot* (fig. 4). This type of pin spot can be used to direct and focus light with pinpoint accuracy, making it very useful for dramatically highlighting or accenting one item in a display.

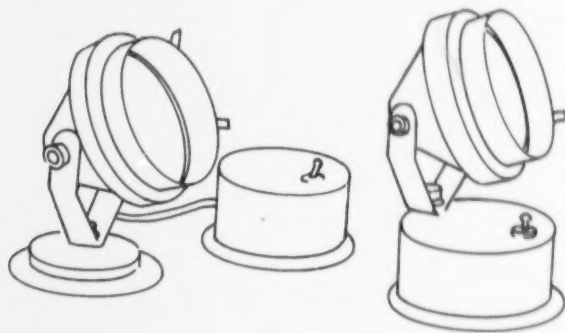


Figure 4. Low-voltage baby pin spots. These particular models are designed for use in window displays.

Low-voltage baby pin spots are also popular because they use less electricity and generate less heat than some of the higher-voltage PAR lamp-and-fixture combinations.



Figure 5. Cylindrical unit mounted on a track. (Courtesy of Visual Merchandising magazine and Lighting Services, Inc.)

Another popular fixture in accent lighting is the *cylindrical unit*, which is a simple cylinder surrounding a lamp (fig. 5). A cylindrical unit can be used to house any R or PAR lamp up to 300 watts, and it can swivel in any direction. Because cylindrical units are simply and attractively designed, and come in many colors and finishes, they are especially popular in areas where the lighting fixtures are highly visible to the customers.

Downlights are light fixtures that are designed to shine light down on objects from overhead. Often used to provide general

areas, they may be suspended from lighting for aisles or other large the ceiling, or recessed into the ceiling so that they are flush with it. Downlights generally house incandescent lamps. They may be either fixed-position fixtures used for general lighting purposes or movable fixtures used for accent lighting.

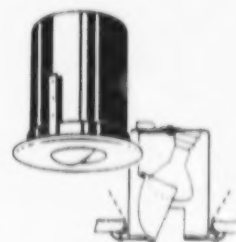


Figure 6. A wall washer, one of several accessories which can be used to redirect or focus a beam of light from a fixture. (Courtesy of Garrison-Wagner Co., St. Louis, Missouri)

Downlights, like many other kinds of fixtures, can be outfitted with various accessories that affect the way they focus light. A louver, for example, is a metal device that can be attached to a downlight to help scatter light into a wider area, thus reducing glare and reflected heat. This is especially useful in areas where downlights shine on glass-topped display cases. Another example of an accessory is a wall washer (fig. 6), which is a half-circle-shaped attachment that directs downlight toward walls, creating interesting, mood-enhancing patterns of light.

Tracks are long pieces of metal on which light fixtures can be mounted (fig. 7). This mounting system makes it easy to move lighting around, by sliding fixtures up and down the tracks. Tracks are usually mounted from the ceiling, and can even be recessed into the ceiling to make them less noticeable, if desired. They will accommodate almost any type of fix-

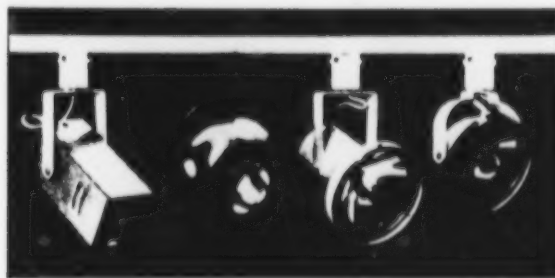


Figure 7. A track lighting system with several types of lights. (Courtesy of Roxter Corporation, in *Visual Merchandising* magazine)

ture, including most PAR fixtures and downlights, so they can be used whether general lighting or accent lighting is needed.

Fluorescent fixtures are fixed-position fixtures used specifically to house the long, cylindrical glass bulbs in which fluorescent light is generated. They are usually rectangular, with the length corresponding to the length of the fluorescent tube, and the width being determined by the number of tubes that will be housed in the fixture (see fig. 8). Fluorescent fixtures are almost always mounted on, or recessed into, ceilings.

There are numerous other types of specific fixtures available today, but the ones described here represent some of the most frequently used.

The Hallmarks of Quality Fixtures

Because fixtures that are used for accent lighting are constantly

being moved about and repositioned, they must be *strong* enough to withstand rough treatment, yet *lightweight* enough to be easily transported. Lightweight fixtures of heavy-gauge steel or aluminum are ideal. Movable accent-lighting fixtures and fixed-light general fixtures alike should have finishes of oven-baked enamel, which will resist chipping, peeling, and heat damage from high lamp temperatures. They should also be well constructed.

Accent fixtures should also be *versatile*. They should be able to swivel in any direction, on both horizontal and vertical planes. They should also be capable of remaining in position without sagging out of line, especially if they are going to be mounted on tracks. Finally, they should be easily adaptable to a variety of accessories, such as louvers, wall washers, or other devices that may be used to help focus light, and to color filters, which are placed

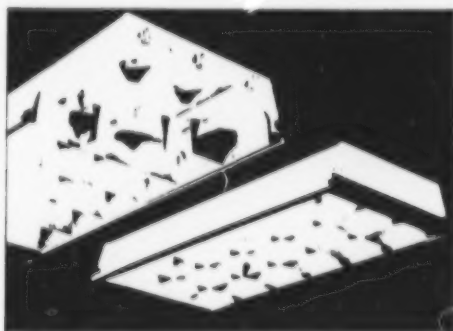


Figure 8. Fluorescent fixtures by Day-Brite Lighting Division (Courtesy of *Visual Merchandising* magazine)

over lamps to create special color effects.

Safety considerations are also important. Fixture wiring should be capable of carrying extremely high electrical currents safely and of withstanding continuous temperatures of up to 250° C. Fixtures should be equipped with rotation stops to prevent short circuits and with on/off switches. All American-made fixtures should carry the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) seal of approval.

The Art of Lighting

General Lighting

General lighting illuminates large spaces in retail environments, rather than accenting or spotlighting particular items or areas. This portion of the chapter explains some of the aesthetic and practical considerations that affect choices in general lighting.

Incandescent lighting has traditionally been the least popular choice for general lighting. Although it looks good in large areas, it is impractical, because it generates so much heat and such high energy costs. However, the development of *tungsten-halogen*, or *quartz*, incandescents (fig. 9), which are much more energy-efficient, is making incandescent lighting a more appealing choice for general illumination.

Fluorescent lights cast a softer, more diffused light than incandescents. This makes them useless for accent lighting, but ideal for general lighting. The only major disadvantage of fluorescents is that their distinctive long shape limits them to one basic kind of fixture and makes them impossible to aim or focus. However, in areas where attractive overall lighting is all that is required, fluorescents are excellent, economical choices.

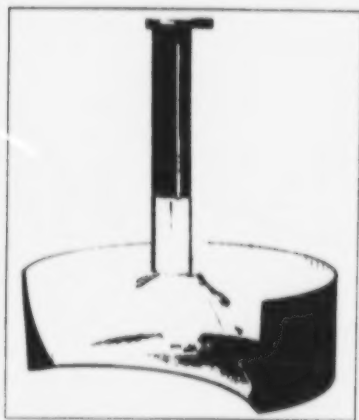


Figure 9. A tungsten-halogen fixture by Lam, Inc. (Courtesy of Visual Merchandising magazine)

HID lighting is the most economical choice for general lighting, since it provides the most illumination for the least amount of energy. HID lights also tend to show textures in greater depth and detail than incandescent or fluorescent fixtures, which creates excellent visual appeal, especially in retail clothing stores. However, because they produce so much light, they must be mounted in ceilings at least 15 feet high, which makes them an impractical choice in existing facilities with ceiling heights that cannot be changed easily. Furthermore, they often require specially designed fixtures (fig. 10), which makes them unappealing to retailers who desire the flexibility of being able to use HID or incandescent lighting. Fortunately, more and more lighting suppliers

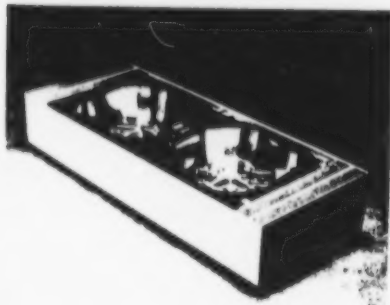


Figure 10. An HID fixture by Sterner Lighting Systems, Inc. (Courtesy of Visual Merchandising magazine)

are offering display fixtures designed to house either type.

Although general lighting is not, by definition, used for highlighting or accenting, it can have a tremendous effect on that type of lighting in a retail environment. For example, if the general lighting in the store is quite bright, it may "wash out" some of the dramatic effects of the accent lighting in the store. On the other hand, if the general lighting is fairly dim, the accent lighting on the merchandise will seem much more dramatic and focused.

One large department store in Texas chose to install general lighting in the form of small pin spots recessed into the ceiling. The overall effect of the pin spots shining down from high above the floor is to create a pleasantly dim general lighting scheme in which accented displays stand out dramatically. (A side effect of using so many incandescent pin spots is that the lighting generates enough heat to take care of all the store's heating needs in winter. In summer, on the other hand, keeping the store cool can be rather expensive.)

Accent Lighting for Windows and Interiors

The overall appearance of merchandise is greatly enhanced when some areas are brighter than others, which is why accent lighting is so important in visual merchandising. Without accent lighting, everything would be evenly illuminated by one kind of general light, and nothing would stand out to attract customers' attention.

Only incandescent and HID lighting are appropriate for accent lighting. Fluorescent lighting, because it is so diffused, cannot be used to highlight form or texture. It also cannot be focused or aimed.

Accent lighting is used in both interior and window displays in a retail store. While some of the same principles of lighting design apply to both, each does have cer-

tain special requirements for the successful use of accent lighting.

Choosing the Right Light for Accents

Accent lights range from dramatic pinpoints of light that can focus on one specific piece of merchandise, to pools of light that may be used to showcase mannequin displays or other similarly sized scenes, to even larger areas of light that call attention to whole groups of merchandise. Each requires a different kind of light.

A pin spot, which uses incandescent lighting, is the best choice for focusing light on a specific piece of merchandise. A baby pin spot (fig. 4), the smallest type, can create a brilliant beam of light the diameter of a can of soda, making it virtually impossible for the viewer to ignore the item on display. Other sizes of pin spots are shown in figure 11.

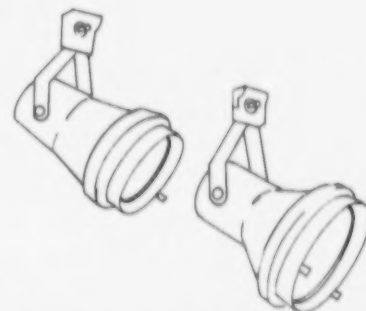


Figure 11. Standard (left) and giant pin spots. These models are designed for use in window displays.

Larger spotlights and cylindrical units can be used to call attention to larger display areas, such as mannequin displays in which entire clothing ensembles are meant to be noticed. Multiple spotlights mounted on a track can be used to intensify the light or to cast a broader area of light.

HID lighting and fixtures are ideal for calling attention to entire display units, because they produce so much light and give so

much emphasis to texture and detail wherever they shine. The sometimes jarring effect of their brightness can be controlled by mixing HID lighting with incandescent accent lighting, fluorescent general lighting, or both.

Positioning Accent Lights

The angle at which a light shines on an object can have a dramatic effect on how the object looks. Lighting from above an area or object highlights and accents textures and forms within the field of light. Lighting from below casts extremely dramatic shadows and should be used sparingly. To compare the effects of the two, see figure 12.

A general rule for accent lighting

from above, whether in a window or an interior, is to position each light at about a 30° angle. This diffuses the light enough to illuminate the whole accented area, rather than just the top of it.

Track lighting fixtures are ideal for positioning lighting above areas to be accented. When mounted on tracks, pin spots and other accent lights are extremely easy to reposition to get just the right angles and effects. In a window display, the track should be kept at least 6 inches from the window glass to give the display worker maximum control over lighting angles.

Light can also be shined on an area from the side, rather than from above or below. Sidelighting is a particularly useful technique

in windows, as it can help to keep light from spilling out of the window area and causing a glare. Sidelighting is especially useful when it is used along with louvers or other accessories designed to direct light.

Sidelighting generally must be combined with lighting from above and in front of the merchandise on display to create an adequate amount of light. Some of the most dramatic window displays use accurately focused front lighting, which provides the main highlights on the merchandise, combined with sidelighting, which provides dramatic accents (fig. 13).

Accenting with Color

The effects of accent lighting on merchandise can be enhanced with the use of colored filters, which can be purchased for almost any type of fixture. Colored light can be used to create atmosphere, attract attention, or bring out undertones of color in displays.

Color filters are most often used to emphasize certain fashion shades and make them appear brighter. For example, if you wanted to accent a sofa that was deep blue, you could use a blue filter to intensify the blue of the fabric. The chart in figure 14 can be used to determine what effect the color of a light will have on the color of the object it illuminates.

Computer-Controlled Lighting¹

Rapid and dramatic developments in computer-controlled automation during the 1980s have revolutionized virtually every type of industry, and lighting is no exception. Before, lighting controls in the retail environment were limited to simple on/off switches, which



Figure 12. Effects of light positioning. In the top photo, light from below casts dramatic shadows. In the lower photo, light from above highlights and accents the object's texture and form.

1. Some information for this section is from Ross de Alessi, "Lighting Christmas Windows," *VM&SD*, vol. 122, no. 3 (March 1991), pp. 22-24.

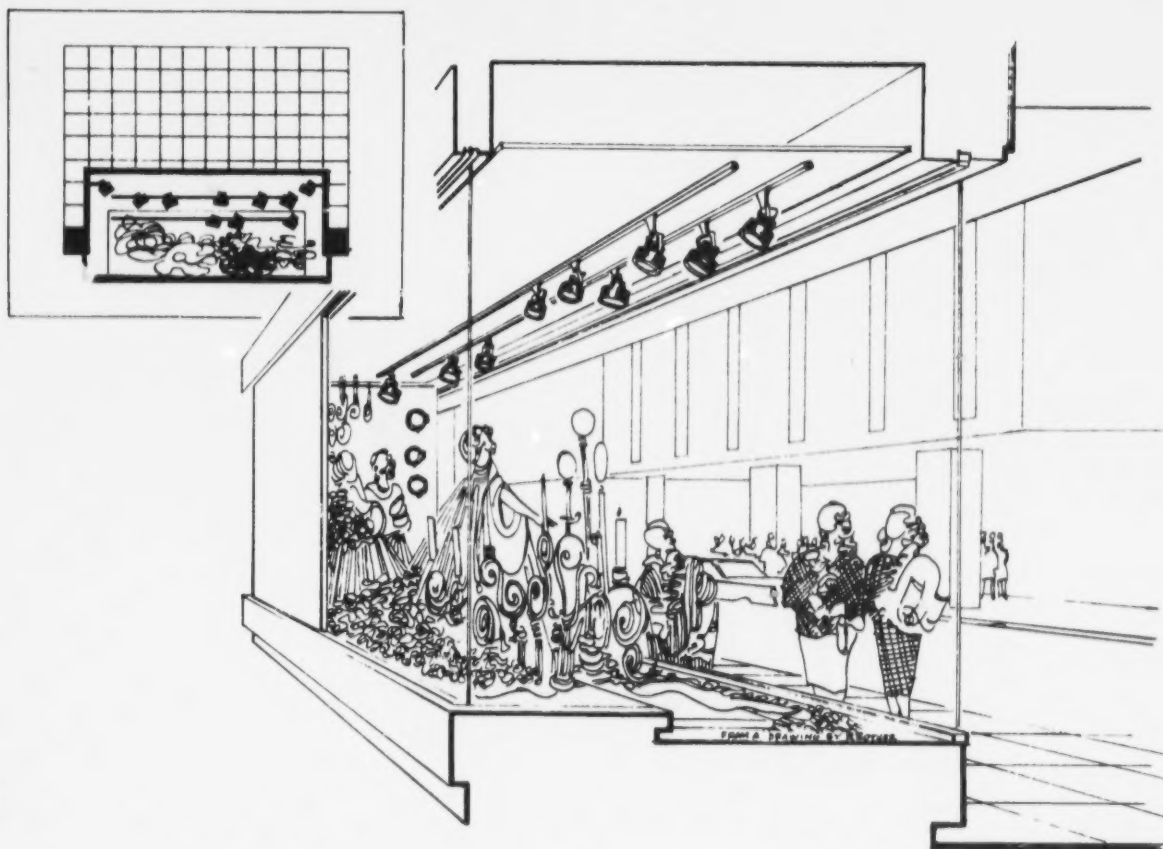


Figure 13. Window display with lighting from above combined with sidelighting. (Courtesy of Lightolier Co., Jersey City, N.J.)

stayed in the "on" position most of the time, and dimmer switches, which were operated manually to exercise basic control over the amount of brightness from a light on a display.

Today, sophisticated automated computer controls for retail lighting make it possible to do things that were unthinkable before. For example, controls on lights in a storefront window display can be programmed to fade the lights automatically when the sun shines into the display, or to bring them up higher when the sky grows dark. Computer controls can also be programmed to turn on dramatic color effects at a preselected hour, such as when the sun has set completely.

Practical Considerations for Accent Lighting

Artistic or dramatic effect is not the only consideration when creating accents with light; several practical considerations must also be kept in mind.

Lighting from overhead is popular in windows and interiors not only because it creates attractive highlights, but also because it keeps light fixtures out of the way of the display. In a window, this is important because it eliminates distractions for the viewer. It is important in an interior display for the same reason, and also because it eliminates the possibility of a customer being blinded by lights or tripping over fixtures.

Some of the worst problems created by accent lighting have to do with the tremendous amount of heat the lights generate. The overwhelming majority of lamps used for accent lighting are incandescent, the hottest of the three types of light. Using lower-wattage incandescents can help, but they may not be sufficient to handle every lighting need. (For example, a 50-watt light placed 8 feet from an object simply will not be bright enough to light that object. A 200-watt light will work fine, but it will also generate much more heat.)

The heat which light generates can fade fabric. It is very important to do everything possible to protect clothing, furniture, and

TABLE 1

Original Color of Fabric	Color of Light Falling on Fabrics					
	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	VIOLET
BLACK	Purplish Black	Deep Maroon	Yellow Olive	Greenish Brown	Blue Black	Faint Violet
WHITE	Red	Orange	Light Yellow	Green	Blue	Violet
ORANGE	Orange Red	Intense Orange	Yellow Orange	Faint Yellow Slightly Greenish	Brown Slightly Violet	Light Blue
RED	Intense Red	Scarlet	Orange	Brown	Violet	Red Purple Violet
YELLOW	Orange	Yellow Orange	Orange Yellow	Yellowish Green	Green	Brown tinged with Faint Red
LIGHT GREEN	Reddish Gray	Yellow Green	Greenish Yellow	Intense Green	Blue Green	Light Purple
DEEP GREEN	Reddish Black	Rusty Green	Yellowish Green	Intenser Green	Greenish Blue	
LIGHT BLUE	Violet	Orange Gray	Yellowish Green	Green Blue	Vivid Blue	
DEEP BLUE		Gray Slightly on Orange	Green Slate	Blue Green	Intenser Blue	Bright Blue Violet
INDIGO BLUE		Orange Maroon	Orange Yellow (very dull)	Dull Green	Dark Blue Indigo	Deep Blue Violet
VIOLET	Purple	Red Maroon	Yellow Maroon	Blue Greenish Brown	Deep Bluish Violet	Deep Violet

(Courtesy Lightolier Company)

Figure 14. A table for determining effects of colored lights on different fabric colors.

other fabric-oriented items in displays from the effects of hot lights. This is one reason merchandise displays are changed so often—not only because they need to be kept fresh and up to date, but also because any fabric that stays under hot lights for more than a week or two will probably be ruined.

Heat fading is another reason so many visual merchandisers prefer lighting from above. Lights hanging from interior or window ceilings are usually a fairly safe distance from the merchandise they illuminate.

The problem of heat fading is worse in window displays than it is in interior displays, if the window faces the outside environment, rather than the inside of a mall. Windows which face the outside expose fabrics to hot sunlight in combination with hot artificial light. In fact, it is not unusual for the temperature in a display window that has a lot of artificial lighting and is directly exposed to the sun to reach 105° or more. To overcome this problem, some retailers install awnings on storefront windows to keep the sun off the merchandise, as well as to cut down on problems with glare. Some buildings have architectural features, such as window overhangs, which can achieve a similar effect. Others may combine overhangs and awnings. High heat in a window display can also create a fire hazard. For safety reasons, many professional lighting designers who work with retail establishments recommend fireproofing fabrics and other

flammable materials that will be shown in windows which receive a lot of direct sunlight.

Questions

1. What is a typical daily example of a use for each of the three types of lighting?
2. Why is HID lighting so economical?
3. Why is incandescent lighting often a poor choice for overhead lighting?
4. What are downlights used for?
5. What is track lighting?
6. Why are fluorescents a poor choice for accent lighting?
7. How can general lighting affect accent lighting?
8. Why is accent lighting important in displays?
9. How does the angle of light affect the appearance of a lighted object?
10. What is the *main* problem associated with the heat from lights in displays?
11. Name the two purposes of lighting in the retail environment
12. List the three types of lamps.
13. List five types of incandescent lamps and three types of HID lamps.
14. Name the three qualities that make a lighting fixture versatile.
15. State which two of the three types of lighting are suitable for accent lighting.
16. Name two purposes for which automated lighting controls could be used.

Projects

Make one or more appropriate reports using the information you gain from these activities.

1. Go to a department store and see how many types of lighting you can identify in one area of the store. What kind of overhead lighting is used? What kinds of accent lighting?
2. Go to a department store that features window displays. Do you see the potential for any special problems with the heat from light? If so, can you detect anything the store has done to deal with such problems?
3. Look carefully at one of the window displays in the store in project 2. How many types of fixtures can you see (spots, tracks, etc.)? Where are the lights positioned (over the display, in front of it, on the floor, etc.)?
4. If possible, talk to one of the display workers in the store or stores that you visit. Ask whether there have been any major changes recently in the way lighting is handled. For example, has the store begun to use HID lighting to save money? If not, why not? Are any particular types of fixture, such as baby pin spots, cylindrical units, etc., becoming more popular in that store? If so, why? Does the store use any automation to control lighting in displays?

10

Effective Use of Mannequins

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. list the three basic types of mannequins;
2. list at least four types of forms;
3. name the two materials most commonly used to manufacture mannequins today, and the three materials most commonly used to manufacture them in the past;
4. name the two things a buyer should look for when selecting a mannequin; and
5. list four things to look for when judging the quality of a mannequin.

Terms to Know

fiberglass—a lightweight, durable substance made of extremely fine strands of glass which have been woven together.

mannequin (MAN-uh-kin)—a figure or model representing the human body which can be used to display or exhibit clothing; sometimes spelled *manikin* or *mannikin*.

papier-mache (PAY-per muh-SHAY)—a substance made of paper pulp mixed with glue, or of strips of paper that have been layered, glued, and pressed together. It can be molded into various shapes when moist and becomes hard and strong when dry.

seam ripper—a sewing tool used to tear open a seam in an article of clothing without ripping the fabric.

support rod—a long, thin rod that holds a mannequin in place on its base.

Mannequins Bring Fashion to "Life"

Mannequins have been used to display clothing to the public since at least the turn of the century. Today, there is still no better means of demonstrating how the clothes on the hangers are going to look on the customers.

The main function of mannequins today is to display apparel, but they can also be used to add visual interest to displays of all kinds—even in stores which do not sell clothing. Some retailers use mannequins to add a "human" dimension to their visual merchandising, with displays which show "people" using products such as furniture, appliances, electronics, or other consumer goods.

Despite their growing popularity in other retail environments, mannequins today are still mainly used to display apparel. The overwhelming majority of them are found in department stores, boutiques, and other places that sell clothes.

Types of Mannequins

There are three basic types of mannequins in use today: lifelike full mannequins; sculptured, or stylized, full mannequins; and forms, which are essentially partial mannequins.

Of the three types, *lifelike full mannequins* (fig. 1) are the most well known and frequently used. Designed to look as much like real human beings as possible, they represent a variety of types of people (from infants and children to adult women and men) in a variety of poses (such as standing, sitting, reclining, and even running). Today, the majority of adult lifelike mannequins represent female, rather than male, forms. Many research studies by department stores have led to the conclusion that, for some reason, men do not respond as well as women to mannequin displays.

At the same time that mannequins reflect real-life activities, they also tend to reflect contemporary ideals of attractiveness. For



Figure 1. Lifelike mannequin (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos and Co.)

example, even though the majority of adult women in the United States wear a size 12 or larger, most of the adult female mannequins are designed to wear a size 7 or 8, because in our society, thinness is often considered attractive in women.

Sculptured or stylized mannequins (fig. 2), unlike lifelike mannequins, are not intended to represent the human form in any exact way. A sculptured mannequin may have two arms and two legs attached to a torso, but the body parts may somehow be exaggerated or stylized. The finish may even be painted an unnatural color, like stark white or glossy black. The result is likely to be something that looks more like an artist's vision of a human being than like a real person. A sculptured mannequin could be a good choice for a display in which making an artistic statement or a statement about the store's image is more important than displaying the clothes realistically.

Although not as attention-getting as full mannequins, forms are

good for displaying one or two items at a time. Shirt forms, for example, which are simply torsos with no heads or arms, can be used to call attention to a man's shirt and tie or a woman's blouse. A form is an advantageous choice when creating displays for a specialty department or specialty store (lingerie, for example), or when working in a limited amount of display space, in any department. There are numerous specific types of forms; some of the most common ones are shown in figure 3.

Sources of Mannequins

There are about 200 mannequin manufacturers around the world today that produce thousands of mannequins a year. Manufacturers oversee the design of new models, produce mannequins in quantities from those models, and market their product to buyers from retail stores and to retail-store-equipment suppliers.

The process of creating mannequins is both artistic and technical. A lifelike mannequin usually starts out as a clay sculpture, created by an artist who is likely to be working with a live model. Once the artist completes the sculpture, the manufacturer makes a plaster mold from it, then casts a master model from that mold. Molds of the mannequin's part are made from the master model and used to produce the mannequin in quantity.

Mannequins are usually made of fiberglass or plastic,¹ which are preferred over other materials today because of their light weight

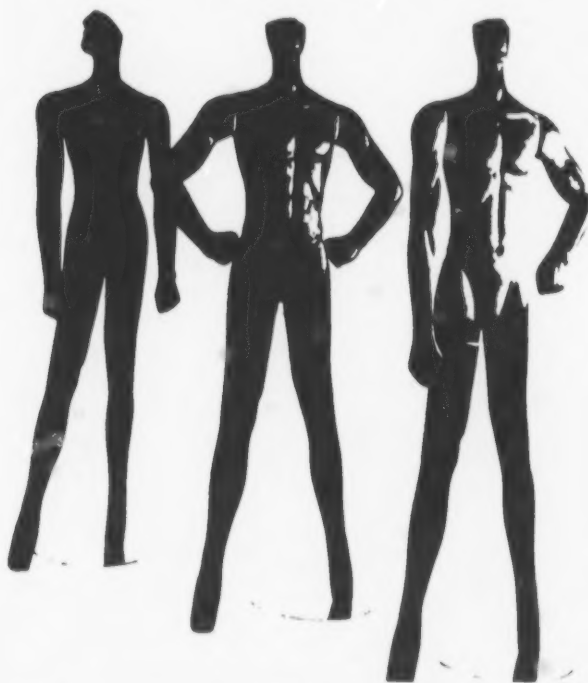
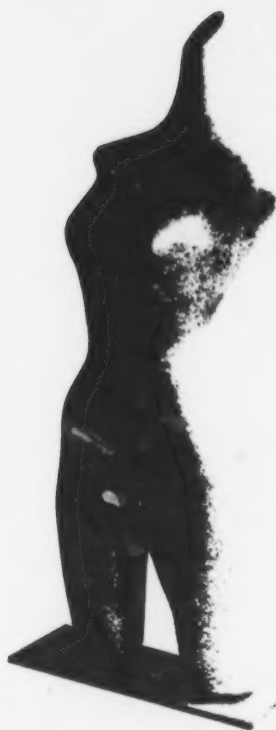


Figure 2. Sculptured mannequins (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos and Co.)

1. Although the majority of mannequins are plastic or fiberglass, some forms (partial mannequins) are still made of papier-mache, covered in light knit fabric. Clothing can be pinned directly onto this type of form, whereas it cannot be pinned on a plastic or fiberglass mannequin.



Torso form. Displays swimwear, activewear, sportswear, lingerie. The version that stops at the waist is called a *bra form*.



Blouse form. Displays women's blouses and sweaters. Also called a *shell*. Men's and children's versions also available.



Shirt form. Jersey-covered papier-mache version. Displays men's shirts or shirts with ties.



Trunk form. For men's swim trunks, underwear, shorts. Women's version available for swimwear, lingerie, underwear. Models with full legs and feet are *slack forms*, used exclusively for slacks/pants.



Suit form. Jersey-covered papier-mache version. Displays men's suits. Styled for American cut suits or fuller-chested European cut.



Dress form. Good for dresses, skirt-and-blouse combinations, complete ensembles.

Figure 3. Forms (Courtesy of Melvin S. Roos and Co.)

a year. These new models, reflecting the latest trends in everything from hairstyles to lifestyles (fig. 4), are introduced at the National Association of Display Industries (NADI) market week, which takes place every June and December in New York City.

Mannequins are relatively expensive. Although some models are as little as \$100 to \$200 each, a high-quality lifelike mannequin can cost as much as \$800. A good mannequin has an average life of about seven years in a retail clothing environment; after that long, it may be too out-of-fashion or too worn to be displayed prominently. It might, however, be sent to a less important area of the store or to a branch of the store which does less volume.

2. Wax, which was used until the 1920s, tended to melt in the heat. Furthermore, models made of wax sometimes weighed as much as 100 pounds. Papier-mache models introduced in the 1930s were lighter, but they were also flimsier, and they were susceptible to water damage. Plaster versions of the 1940s shattered easily if they were dropped.

Selecting and Purchasing Mannequins

The responsibility for purchasing mannequins generally falls to a store's visual merchandising manager, who oversees the visual presentation of the store's merchandise. The manager may go to market to order new mannequins or may order by catalog from manufacturers or from suppliers who represent several different manufacturers.

In selecting a mannequin, the buyer looks first for what is known in the fashion industry as "attitude," a term that refers to the overall effect created by the mannequin's styling, pose and mood. The buyer is looking for an attitude that is in step with the store's image. For example, a buyer for a store that has a high-fashion image will look for a sophisticated, glamorous attitude.

The other thing the buyer looks for is quality. A lifelike mannequin should be as close to "real" as possible, with believable features and detailed hands, fingers, and toes. If the mannequin comes with a wig, as many high-quality

mannequins do, it should fit the head properly. If the mannequin is posed, the pose should be natural and lifelike, not stiff or awkward. The mannequin should also be well constructed, with a durable finish.

Display Areas for Mannequins

In retail clothing stores, mannequins are most often displayed at the entrances to departments within the store or in the store's display windows. Displays are normally set up by window dressers or display workers under the visual merchandising manager's supervision.

At entrances to store departments, mannequins can be used to establish mood or image (fig. 4). They are generally placed in a prominent spot leading into the department, and they are often elevated on a platform, which not only makes them more noticeable, but also holds them in place. If the entrance to the department is on an aisle, care must be taken to set the mannequins and platforms far enough back from the aisle to



Figure 4. Mannequin displays at department entrances establish tone and mood. (Photo taken courtesy of J.C. Penney Co., Highland Mall, Austin, Texas)

keep them out of the customers' way.

In a window display, a mannequin is likely to be part of a carefully designed, entertaining scene that is meant to entice passing consumers to enter the store. For example, in the summer, there might be a beach scene, complete with sand and picnic coolers, where mannequins in swimwear relax on lawn chairs. Window displays usually feature similarly attired mannequins in groups of two or more.

In window displays, platforms are often unnecessary, since the figures are not competing with other items in the environment for the consumer's attention. If platforms are not used, the mannequins may be kept in place by thin wires stretching from beneath their clothing to the floor.

Preparing Mannequins for Display

Selecting mannequins, dressing them, and preparing them for presentation in a display calls for specialized knowledge in a variety of areas.

First, the right mannequins must be chosen for the clothes that are going to be featured. Should they be male or female, young or old, posing quietly or ready for action? The right choice can be made by considering the clothes to be displayed, the activity to be represented, and the environment in which the mannequin is to be set up.

Once the mannequins have been selected, they must be dressed. There are different procedures for dressing mannequins, depending on what clothes they will wear. All mannequins are designed to be taken apart at the arms and hips to make them easier to dress. Some can even be taken apart at the legs, too, to make it easier to dress them in pants. Step-by-step explanations of how to dress mannequins in different types of clothing are provided in figure 5.

Regardless of the type of clothing in which a mannequin is being dressed, the figure must be handled very carefully throughout the dressing process. Even though today's plastic and fiberglass mannequins are fairly resilient, their finishes can be easily scratched and marred if care is not taken to avoid such damage. This is especially true around finely detailed areas, such as the face and hands. To protect the face, a mannequin's head should always be protected with a plastic bag while the figure is being dressed. To avoid accidental damage to a mannequin's hands, placement of the hands should always be the last step in the dressing process. If possible, workers should wear disposable gloves when handling a mannequin's hands.

After the mannequin is dressed, it may be accessorized. Accessories may be quite simple or very elaborate, depending on what is appropriate for the clothing or the setting. A fancy display might even call for painting the mannequin's nails, applying makeup to its face, and attaching earrings. Any time accessories with metal parts are used, special precautions must be taken to protect the finish on the mannequin. Sometimes, tiny pieces of cotton are used as barriers between metal and mannequin. Nothing should ever be taped to the mannequin's surface.

Gloves should never be placed on a mannequin's hands, which are far too delicate to withstand all the pushing and tugging required to fit gloves. If gloves are desired, special models with gloves already on the hands may be purchased.

The next step after accessorizing is putting on a mannequin's wig. Not all mannequins have wigs; some simply have "sculpted" hair that is part of the head. However, a high-quality mannequin is likely to come with a wig that has been designed especially for that model. Such a wig should fit the mannequin well, but if it

does not settle properly on the head for some reason, cotton or tissue can be placed on the mannequin's scalp to improve the fit.

Caring For and Storing Mannequins

It is just as important to handle mannequins carefully when storing them as it is when preparing them for display. Before a mannequin is put away, it should be inspected carefully for signs of dirt and damage. Light soil can be wiped away with a damp cloth and mild detergent. (A mannequin should never be scrubbed; heavy pressure can remove its finish.) Very small chips and crack lines can be touched up with special paint that is available from the manufacturer. Major repairs should be left to the manufacturer.

Mannequins should be stored in one piece, if possible, with the base stored separately from the body. If the mannequin has a wig, the wig should be stored separately, in a plastic bag. If space considerations make it difficult to store a full-size mannequin in one piece, the parts may be stored separately if they are individually wrapped in protective material. If a mannequin's parts are stored separately, they should all be labeled appropriately, to avoid mixing parts from different mannequins at a later time.

Some of the information in this section comes from Emily and Per Ola d'Aulaire, "Mannequins, the Mute Mirrors of Fashion History," *Smithsonian*, vol. 22, no. 1 (April 1991), pp. 66-78.

Questions

1. How long have mannequins been in use as models on which to display clothing?
2. Describe ways in which mannequins might be used in displays, other than for displaying clothing.

3. Give an example of how mannequins reflect contemporary ideals of beauty.
4. When would it be appropriate to use a stylized mannequin, instead of a lifelike one?
5. How much do mannequins cost?
6. Describe the proper procedure for storing mannequins.
7. List the three basic types of mannequins.
8. List at least four types of forms.
9. Name the two materials most commonly used to manufacture mannequins today, and the three most commonly used in the past.
10. Name the two things a buyer should look for when selecting a mannequin.
11. List four things to look for when judging the quality of a mannequin.

Projects

Make one or more reports based on the activities given below.

1. Using the information you have learned in this assignment about selecting the proper mannequins for a display, preparing them for display, and using mannequins in window displays, plan a window display of your own. Choose a theme for the display, then decide how many mannequins should be in it, what kind of mannequins you will use, what kind of clothes you will dress them in, and so forth.
2. Go to a department store and find three different places where full mannequins are used in displays. Why do you suppose they are where they

are? Are they being used to set the tone for the entrance to a department? Are they being used to create an image for a certain department? To promote clothing for a particular theme or holiday? Or a combination of these and other purposes?

3. While you are at the department store, go to the women's department, juniors' department, men's department, and young men's department, and see how many displays use full mannequins. How many women's and juniors' displays use full mannequins, compared to men's and young men's displays? Based on the answer, do you think the department store you surveyed believes in the theory that male shoppers do not respond as well as women to mannequin displays?

How to Dress a Mannequin Properly

Dress

1. Detach support rod from base, and set support rod aside. Set up base in desired area.
2. Disassemble mannequin, and put hosiery and shoes on legs and feet.
3. Use support rod to secure legs and hips to base.
4. Put upper torso into place.
5. Pull dress over mannequin's head.
6. Put arms through sleeves, and secure arms in shoulder sockets.
7. Close neck or back opening of dress.
8. Check for proper fit. If necessary, use pins on loose material to adjust the fit. Do *not* let pins come into direct contact with the mannequin surface.
9. Smooth out the fabric, making sure that the dress is hanging properly and that the hem is even.

Skirt and Blouse

1. Follow same procedure as for a dress, steps 1-4 only.
2. After completing step 4, follow same procedure as for slacks, steps 7-10 only.

Slacks or Shorts

1. Detach support rod from base, and set support rod aside. Set up base in desired area.
2. Use a seam ripper to cut a small hole in the crotch seam of the clothing, starting at the lower portion of the back part of the seam.
3. Pull pants over legs and hips. Do not close fly or side placket.
4. Put socks and shoes on legs and feet.
5. Insert support rod into mannequin through hole in slacks.
6. Fit support rod on base to secure legs and hips to base.
7. Put on shirt or blouse, and insert arms through sleeves.
8. Button shirt or blouse, and secure arms in shoulder sockets.
9. Tuck in shirttails, and close fly or side placket.
10. Smooth wrinkled or pouched areas on shirt, working from back to front.

Suit

1. Follow same procedure as for slacks, steps 1-7 only.
2. Secure arms in shoulder sockets.
3. Put suit coat on over shirt.
4. Button and tuck in shirt.
5. Smooth out coat, and button it.

Figure 5. Specific instructions for dressing full mannequins with different clothing styles.

11

Merchandise Signing¹

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

1. tell which areas of signing need specific policies;
2. compose good sign copy, following the recommended guidelines;
3. prepare a sign layout, showing approximate size, typeface, and type size;
4. cite some of the truth-in-advertising recommendations for comparative pricing, fiber and fabric identification, and use of trade names;
5. name the standard sign sizes that fit standard sign holders; and
6. describe some important procedures to follow in printing and maintaining signs.

Terms to Know

generic (juh NER ik)—a general classification; a name given to a class of goods or items that is commonly known; not protected by trade name or trademark; cannot be registered as a trade name.

requisition (REK kwuh ZIH shun)—comes from the root word, request; to make a written request for work, services, or supplies.

sans serif (SANS SER if)—a type style that is plain, or without a serif. Serifs are the horizontal bars at the top and bottom of a letter.

signing (SIN ing)—the act of using signs or cards that give factual information about the merchandise on display.

sign topper—a card that fits above the regular sign card into the top of the signholder. It announces or proclaims something special about the event or promotion.

typeface—the type style, such as gothic or sans serif, Roman, text, script, as examples.

type size—type is measured by its height. There are 72 points to an inch of type.

Signs Sell Merchandise

Signs are silent sales assistants. They are one of the more important parts of point-of-sale merchandising and display. A good sign can be as effective as a salesperson in the self-selection process, provided that all the other rules of good merchandising have been followed.

Merchandise Signing

A sign in merchandising language is any identifying card that (1) identifies a product or service, (2) gives information about the product or service, and (3) gives a price or terms regarding the product or service.

A good sign should answer four questions that most customers have in mind when they see a display of merchandise.

1. What is it?
2. Why should I buy it?
(What will it do for me?)

3. Why should I buy it now?
4. How much is it? (What are the terms or conditions of the sale?)

To answer any or all of these questions, a sign usually comes under one of three categories. Most of them are *selling signs*. This means they are used as part of a display that helps sell the merchandise. Some of them are *category signs* that call attention to a special sale or promotional event, or to an assortment of merchandise that is a special group. A few of them are *institutional signs*. These promote the company or some of its services, such as credit, delivery, and gift wrapping, as examples.

Signs as Part of the Promotional Mix

Most stores have a promotion budget and plan that specifies how, when, where, and in what form the promotional activities will be carried out. The variety of media, including newspaper ads, radio and TV spots, magazines, circulars or broadsides, billboards, direct mail, and internal promotions, is known as the *promotional mix*. Most of the

¹Content for this assignment is drawn largely from "Foley's Sign Manual, 1976," printed for Foley's, a division of Federated Department Stores.

budget is spent on external promotion or advertising. However, some is reserved for internal promotion that is very effective and costs the least.

This is mainly the signing activities of the store. It is either the responsibility of display or the merchandising division to carry out signing activities. In most cases, it is display's responsibility to set up sign holders in strategic locations. Display workers must keep these areas filled with the right signs and keep them current.

Many stores today rely upon self-selection by the customer with little or no assistance from the sales staff. So the sign itself carries a major promotional and selling responsibility. A good signing policy does the following for merchandising:

1. gives the facts about any kind of merchandise;
2. informs customers singly or in groups about the merchandise;
3. informs one customer without ignoring others who may be waiting;
4. sells day in and day out without getting tired, becoming grumpy or impatient, and never asks for a raise;
5. gives good performance at low cost;
6. gives information in a straightforward manner; without high pressure or indifference;
7. sells items or services that are not seen but are available;
8. creates sales or interest in other departments; and
9. tells a merchandising story in only three seconds time.

A good sign does all these things well, but only if a strong sign policy is rigidly followed. If signs are composed and used according to that policy, they can be effective merchandising tools.

Sign Policy

A part of the store's merchandising policy should relate to signing.

Every store has a different policy, but many of them are similar. A signing policy should spell out the following guidelines:

- sign requisition and time lines;
- sign layout and composition standards;
- sign sizes, colors, and printing codes;
- sign maintenance and rotation; and
- pricing standards

Sign Requisition and Time Lines

A good sign policy should tell *who* can request a sign, *who* is responsible for the wording on the sign, *who* should print the sign, *who* should install the sign, and what time lines are given for requisitions.

Many stores use a standard *sign requisition form* (see fig. 1). It specifies the department, the event, the details of the sign message, the size needed, and the time it is to be delivered. Many policies specify who has requisition authority. This is usually a department manager, a merchandising manager, a display manager or worker, or promotion personnel. The sign shop or sign press operator will honor only those requisitions that are signed by the right authority. Time limits are very specific and are seldom broken except in cases of emergency. The length of time depends upon the size of the store, the number of departments, and the personnel involved. Sign time limits may be from one day to as much as a week before delivery.

Sign Layout

Signs should have a uniform appearance to be good merchandising aids. This ties departments together and gives a look of uniformity and harmony to the total visual merchandising concept. It assures customers that the sign is reliable.

Sizes should be of a uniform size or sizes, color, and stock. They should have one readable typeface and follow a uniform layout. For the most part, retailers use a *sans serif* typeface (see fig. 2), printed in

black ink on white cardstock. They specify a legible type size that can easily be read from a distance of 10 to 12 feet. The layout and arrangement of information should also be uniform.

The following is a typical sign layout followed by many stores:

- *Top line:* (headline or lead-in line) Why you should buy.
- *Second line* (main head): (product name) What it is.
- *Third, Fourth, and Fifth lines:* (product features/benefits) What the product will do for you.
- *Last line:* (price now/original price) Why you should buy now and what the product will actually cost you.

Each of these lines has a uniform typeface and size. This is followed exactly by the printer on the sign press.

Sign Composition and Wording

Definite guidelines on what can and should be stated on a sign should be followed. Here are some good guidelines:

1. All signs must be *accurate* in wording, in factual content, and in what the message implies. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has specific guidelines under its "truth-in-advertising" regulations. State and some local laws govern the same thing.
2. Information on a sign must be consistent with what is advertised.
3. All references to materials, fabrics, composition, workmanship, content, qualities, and functions must be verified.
4. All references to materials, fabrics, and trademarks must be in accordance with FTC regulations.
5. All references to comparative prices must be in accordance with approved store policy. Terms should be approved for use, such as "regularly," "value,"

foleys

SIGN REQUISITION

311010 6/80

PLEASE ALLOW: 4 Working days for REGULAR SELLING signs.
10 Working days for all SALES & type set signs.

IMPORTANT: All signs are subject to F.T.C. regulation. Be especially sure of all fabric identification and comparative prices.

DIVISIONAL _____

AREA _____

REQUESTED BY _____

DEPT. NO. _____

PHONE EXT. _____

DATE ORDERED _____

DATE REQUESTED _____

	Downtown	Shattucktown	Pasadena	Alameda	Northwest	Memorial	Greenspoint	Highland	San Jose	North Star				
2 x 11														
1 1/2 x 7														
3 1/2 x 3														
5 1/2 x 7														

Sizes below require sign shop approval.

7 x 11														
4 1/2 x 14														
11 x 14														
4 1/2 x 28														
22 x 28														

LEAD IN LINE Start story with a reason to buy or customer benefit.

KEY COPY What are you selling?

MANUF. or BRAND NAME With trademark, if applicable.

SELLING POINTS List several sales features not obvious to customer.

THIS REQUEST IS FOR:

☐ Reg. Selling

☐ Sale or Other

☐ PRINT ON BOTH SIDES

☐ LANDSCAPE

☐ VERTICAL

COMPARATIVE:

Regular \$ _____

Was or
Were \$ _____

If Perfect \$ _____

SELLING PRICE

\$ _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

OPERATOR _____ DATE _____

Figure 1

Futura News Gothic Record Gothic

Round Sans Serif types

Radiant FRANKLIN GOTHIC

Two-weight Sans Serif types

Standard Folio Helvetica

One-weight Sans Serif types

Figure 2. Retailers prefer sans serif typefaces for high legibility. All of these are good for merchandise signing.

"formerly," "reduced," "percent off," "comparable to," as examples.

6. Brand names are permitted in sign copy only as long as the entire contents of the display are of that same brand.
7. Many stores do not permit manufacturer or resource logos, except those of the store and its own brands.

Sign Copywriting

In composing sign copy, specific guidelines and instructions must be followed. This ensures that a good

selling and merchandising message reaches the shopper.

1. For the *headline* or *lead-in*, tell the customer something interesting that is not obvious. Never waste space telling the customer what can be readily seen. It should state a benefit or tell the customer why the product should be purchased.
2. The main head, or second line, should state the product name, or what it is. There may be an advantage to using the brand name or a trademark name in speci-

fying the product. If so, use it.

3. There should be at least two but not more than three features or benefits. These should be brief, concise facts that make the product desirable or beneficial.
4. If there are size ranges or varying styles, these may be specified. This is not always necessary.
5. The price should specify boldly the selling price and unit, such as *each*, *package*, *pair*, *set*, or *box*. If there is a comparable price statement, give it above, below, or beside the current selling price. It should not be a part of the sales copy.

Table 1 is a typical sign for self-selection of merchandise:

The *lead-in* tells the customer what the product will do. This is a *benefit*. Here is a product that will keep you warm all winter. The *brand name* of the product is important because it helps identify a type of portable heater that is currently being advertised. It is an important tie-in with a strong national advertising promotion. It gives instant product recognition, and the customer is already presold on that brand name.

The *copy* states that the heater uses an inexpensive type of fuel that is readily available. It has a high heating capacity in relation to size. It also tells how much space can be heated comfortably. These are product facts. But they also tell the shopper how he or she will benefit from buying this heater.

The *price* is reasonable when compared with the warmth, comfort, portability, convenience, and fuel expense.

A good sign must have a *selling message*. The above sign copy is factual. It spells out benefits and features, and tells the customer what may not be readily known. It says, "Now is the time to buy, and this is the product you need."

Sign copywriting follows the same basic rules as good selling

TABLE 1

Stay warm all winter 	lead-in heading
KERO-SUN PORTABLE HEATERS	main head
• Uses inexpensive kerosene	} sales copy
• 6,000 BTU heating capacity	
• Keeps a 9 × 12-foot room cozy	
\$79.95	price

conversation. If you know why people buy, you can write good sign copy. People buy to:

- acquire beauty, fashion, health, pleasure, entertainment
- live in comfort, style, convenience
- be admired, loved, envied
- achieve prestige, fulfillment
- save money, buy good value, get a bargain

These are your cues to writing good lead-in copy.

Tell the customer what the product is. If it is obvious you are selling a microwave oven, it may not be obvious that it browns meat while it cooks. This is a good product identifier: **NEW! Self-Browning LITTON MICROWAVE OVEN.**

Other examples are:

- Fur-lined fashion boots
- Pierre Cardin all-silk ties
- Dacron Polyester/Wool-Blend Suits
- Oneida Stainless Steel Flatware
- Schwinn 10-Speed Bicycles
- Silk/Polyester Blouses

The purpose of the main head is to identify exactly which product you are pricing. This is particularly true when more than a single item is on a rack, merchandiser, table, or counter. If you have only one

price sign, the shopper will not be able to tell which item you are pricing.

The *feature-benefit copy* must be factual, accurate, and give concise bits of sales information that is not obvious. Features should be something outstanding or unique. For example, the sales copy on a tote bag might read:

- Elastic, expandable sides
- Reinforced leather handle
- Triple-stitched seams
- Large, inner security pocket
- Long-wearing cotton canvas
- Cleans with a damp cloth
- Fashionable khaki and navy trim

These tell the story and give the real selling message. While they stress features, they also give the benefits, or why the shopper should own this bag. Most stores limit feature-benefit lines to three. They should be the ones you think are most beneficial and have the most sales appeal.

Where do you find product information for writing sales copy? You can get it from the buyer, the department head, catalogs, advertising, labels and hang tags on the merchandise, cartons and packaging, and manufacturers' fact sheets. If you know nothing about the merchandise, find the buyer or per-

son who bought it. The advertising manager can also help.

Never guess. Always check your copy for accuracy. Never use general terms, cutesy language, trade terms not well known to the public, abbreviations, or incorrect generic terms. *Always check for errors and spelling.* Nothing can be worse than a sign with a glaring error. And always check the price to see that it is correct.

Comparative Pricing Policy

Truth-in-advertising policies were largely designed to keep from misleading customers and misrepresenting prices. For this reason, most stores have policies on what makes acceptable wording for comparative prices. (A price that is less than the regular price, or indicates a markdown or savings over the normal price, is called a comparative price.)

The following are good guidelines, if you don't have specific ones in your department:

- *Sale* can only be used on a sign if there is an actual reduction from the normal selling price.
- *Clearance* can only be used if there is a final reduction in price that is permanent. It should indicate an end-of-season clearance, or final markdown to clear out one lot of merchandise.
- *Regular* should only be used to indicate the normal, or original, selling price before the first markdown.
- *Was* or *Were* should only be used to indicate the price that existed before the current price. These can be used to indicate the first markdown before the final clearance or final markdown price.
- *If Perfect* can be used in a price to indicate the normal selling price if the item was perfect. Usually such merchandise should be labeled as *irregulars* or *seconds*.
- *Save* ____ % must be accurate and factual. If an item

normally sells for \$10.00 and is marked down to \$8.00, you can say, "Save 20%." Savings stated as percentages must be exact, and they must represent a savings over the regular selling price.

- **Price Ranges** can be stated for a group of merchandise that has several different prices. For example, "Sport Shirts. Regularly \$15.95 to \$19.95. Now \$11.99 to \$14.99. Save 25%." A savings on a price range must be the same for all prices within the group, not just one.
- **Special Purchase** prices are not regular prices or sale prices. A special price indicates a special buy but should never be used as a comparative price. Even though a savings is implied, it should not be stated as one.
- **Terms** that should be avoided which are confusing, too general, or vague are these: *Value, Compare, Usually, Made To Sell For, List Price, and Manufacturer's Suggested Price.*

Fabric Identification Terms

Any store should have policies that relate to the use of fiber and fabric terms in sign copy. Generally, the same ones that relate to advertising can be used in sign copy policies. Where no guidelines exist, the following can be used:

- **Common Fabric Terms and Weaves** should use the generic fiber along with the weave. For example: *cotton percale, wool tweed, rayon satin, polyester knit, or polyester/cotton denim* all indicate a blend of fibers.
- **Blends** of fibers should state the fiber content, but percentages do not have to be stated. For example, a blend of 50% cotton, 30% rayon, and 20% acetate can state

"cotton/rayon/acetate blend." If any fiber is less than 5% by weight, it does not have to be identified specifically.

- **Trade Names** can be used in fiber and fabric identification, but only when the trade name appears alongside the fiber it identifies. For example, Dacron polyester, Dynel monacrylic, DuPont nylon, Bemberg rayon.

The following are fabric names. They are generic terms that should be identified with the fiber content.

batiste	ninon
broadcloth	percale
brocade	plush
chenille	poplin
cheviot	organza
chiffon	oxford cloth
chintz	ramie
corduroy	sateen
crepe	satin
damask	serge
faille	sharkskin
flannel	taffeta
gabardine	terry cloth
jersey	tricot
lace	tulle
linen	tweed
madras	twill
marquisette	velour
matelassé	velvet
muslin	voile
net	worsted

Sign Sizes and Uses

Sign holders come in standard sizes. So signs are cut to fit these holders. Card stock for signs comes in full sheet sizes of 22 by 28 inches. Sign sizes are these:

- **Full sheet:** 22 × 28 inches
- **Half sheet:** 22 × 14 inches
- **Quarter sheet:** 11 × 14 inches
- **Eighth sheet:** 11 × 7 inches
- **Sixteenth sheet:** 5½ × 7 inches

A full sheet can be cut accurately for all sizes of signs without having waste or trim pieces. The sizing chart (see table 2) shows standard sign sizes and cuts.

Sixteenth-Sheet Sizes

In most stores, the most popular sign size for point-of-sale merchandising is the 5½ × 7 inches, or sixteenth-sheet. The holders for these signs have many types and styles of mountings. So they can fit almost every type of fixture.

Most sign holders are raised on a single or double stem with a flat base piece. The base permits the sign to stand alone without extra weighting. Or merchandise can be on top of the base to hide it. An easel-type frame rests directly on the base. These are useful on top of merchandise racks and fixtures where the sign is at eye level. A stemmed holder would make the sign too high.

In addition to these two popular styles, sign holders can have a clamp mounting for hanging racks, hanging types for mounting on pegboard walls, and screw-on types for flat, plain walls. Also they can have bases that slide into a metal track and are movable up and down long counters, such as those used in linens and domestics (see fig. 3).

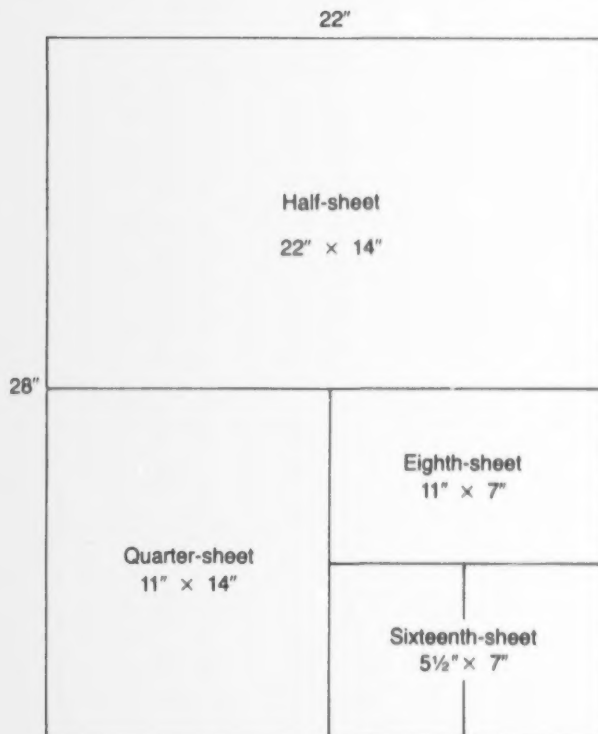
Eighth-Sheet Sizes

The second most popular and most often used signs are eighth-sheet, 7 by 14 inches. Sign holders are most often made to display these signs horizontally, or 14 inches wide by 7 inches high. This size is favored for most counters, tables, and merchandisers that have several shelves and continuous stacks of merchandise. It's a good size to use with larger type sizes. This makes the sign legible at a distance of 8 to 10 feet away. The same styles of sign holders are made for these signs as for the smaller sixteenth-sheet sizes.

Larger Sizes

Quarter-sheet, half-sheet, and full-sheet sizes are generally made to fit frames that are standing on a floor-based pedestal or stem. These are useful for signs that make more of an "announcement" than a selling message for merchandise. Half-

TABLE 2



sheet and full-sheet signs are called "posters."

The quarter-sheet, 11 by 14-inch size, is an effective merchandise sign when used on large, bulk displays of items such as power tools, large appliances, and home furnishings. These are known as hard goods or "big ticket" goods. This sheet is also useful in window displays where you want a larger sign for greater visibility. If used on regular merchandise racks and counters, the sign size tends to overpower and hide the merchandise behind it.

Half-sheet (22 × 14 inches) and full-sheet (22 × 28 inches) posters are useful near main entrances, elevator and escalator landings, or at department and shop entrances. Except for very special promotional events, their use is mostly limited to institutional signs. They call attention to services such as credit accounts, special sale events, civic announcements, or other

events of an unusual or public nature.

These are also good to call attention to special features of a sale-related nature. For example, near the entrance to the book department, a full-sheet poster may announce that a famous author will be on hand for an autograph party of a new book. Or an announcement poster may call attention to a mass "tent sale" outside on the parking lot. It may be used to call attention to a new designer series of fashions that is now being stocked. It can tell where in the store these items are found. These signs may remind people of a local United Fund drive, blood donor need, or simply tell people to vote in an upcoming election.

Sign Shop Operation

Every store should have some type of sign equipment or space for producing signs. In many stores, the

sign shop operation is limited because the need for new signs is minimal. In larger operations, the need is greater for a larger working space and more equipment.

Hand-lettered signs are discouraged, even when you have a professional show card artist. Machine-lettered signs look professional, uniform, and are always in good taste when laid out properly. It is best in most stores if only one person or small group is in charge of sign production. This assures proper use of the sign machine, maintenance of equipment, proper storage of signing materials, and good housekeeping.

The small flatbed and movable platen-type sign machine is adequate for most needs. Large stores with a central sign shop and full production schedules daily require different presses and resources for their needs. These shops are specialized and fit only a few operations. This assignment will treat only the smaller sign shop operations (see fig. 4).

If hiring a full-time sign shop operator is not feasible, these responsibilities most often belong to the display department. To have an efficient operation, the store should have (1) designated operators who are properly trained to use the equipment and produce the signs, (2) a sign ordering or requisition system, and (3) a set of sign guidelines and policies to assure timely, accurate, and uniform signing. This is one of the most important parts of visual merchandising. And it's vital for sales efficiency.

In a small store operation, a small press is sufficient to print sizes up to an 11 × 14-inch sign. This fills most signing needs. Poster sizes require a larger press and a greater range of typefaces. It is best if merchandise signs use a single typeface. Sans serif types are preferred because they are easier to read and have a contemporary appearance. Black ink on white card stock is generally preferred to colored inks and colored card stocks.

For specials and sale event promotions, some stores will use a yel-

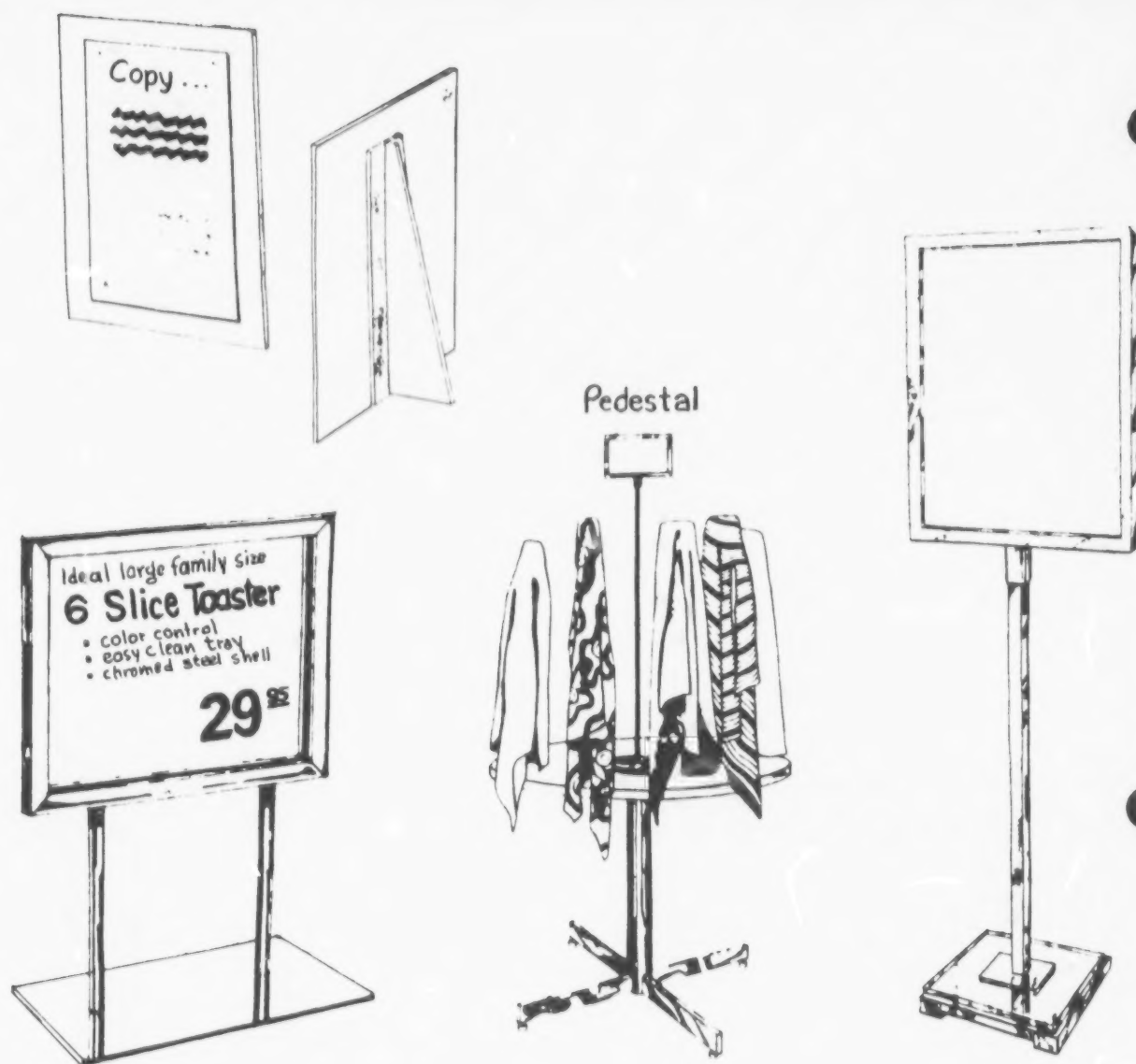


Figure 3. Signholders are standard sizes, in a variety of finishes and materials, are freestanding, or are made to attach to fixtures. (Courtesy Foley's Department Stores, Houston, Texas)

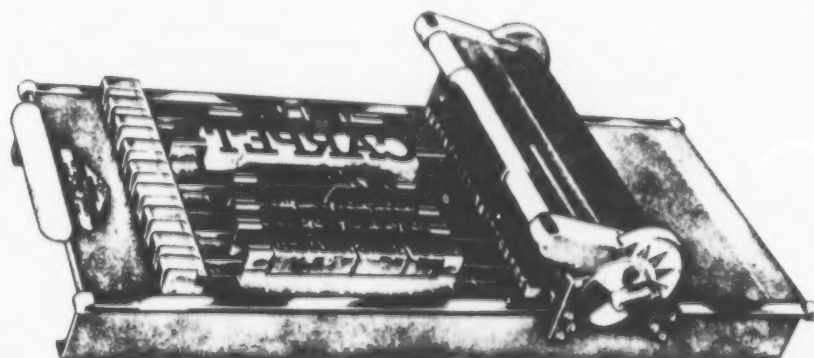


Figure 4. Typical small sign press (Courtesy Dick Blick, Galesburg, Illinois)

low card stock with black ink. The colored stock denotes a special item sale, and black on yellow has the highest visibility and legibility rate of any two-color combinations.

It is best to avoid mixing two colors on the same sign. A few stores will put "As Advertised" or "Special" or "Clearance" in red ink, mixing it with the black. However, two colors mixed is confusing to many shoppers. A single color is preferred.

Sign toppers are used to denote specials, advertised items, sale items, and clearance and mark-down items. These are special cards that fit into the top of the sign holder. They can be reused over a period of time. These toppers are usually printed commercially with two colors. Stores with large sign shops have a silk-screen device for printing these.

Guidelines for Sign Production

Larger stores have explicit guidelines and a list of "do's and don'ts" for sign operation, ordering, layout, and sign maintenance. In the absence of such guidelines and policies, the following are good ones to observe:

- Signs should sell. Take care to use words and phrases that communicate. Avoid technical terms, abbreviations, and slang or cutesy expressions. Select words that have meaning, and eliminate the unnecessary or obvious.
- Check for correctness. *Sign copy should always be edited for correct spelling, correct grammar, correct punctuation, brand name and tradename usage, generic terms, and use of accurate figures.* Make sure the copy is right and verified before printing. Check the sign after printing to see that you have aligned the letters correctly. See that you have not transposed letters or

digits in the printing process.

- Neatness is most important. A messy, smudged sign has no value and should never be used. Destroy any sign that does not pass close inspection or becomes dirty, soiled, or smudged while in use. Never cross out a word or price and write in another. Never paste one price over another. Make a new sign.
- Signs are not directories or catalogs. Keep words and the number of lines of type to a specified minimum. Keep plenty of margin all around and use a lot of white space.
- Avoid hand lettering with pen and ink or brush. Hand lettering, even when professionally done, does not have the sales appeal or visual impact of machine lettering. It looks old-fashioned. It does not fit with contemporary merchandising.
- Never tape, staple, or tack signs to fixtures or merchandise. Use sign holders designed for the fixturing system in the store. Make signs visible, but do not let them get too large for the merchandise or the fixture.
- Never have a blank sign back that faces the customer. If it is desirable, you may have some other institutional message on the backside of signs. You might call attention to credit, delivery, or gift wrap policies.
- Never leave a blank sign holder in place. Remove and store it when not in use.
- Remove signs as soon as they become obsolete. Do not store or save them. Make a new sign to preserve freshness and neatness.

Questions

The answer to each statement is

found in this assignment. Write out each statement as it appears, filling in the blank space with the appropriate word or phrase. *Underline* your answer.

1. The top line on a standard sign card is called the _____, or _____.
2. The main head, or second line, identifies the specific _____.
3. The two or three lines underneath the main head give the _____ or _____ of the merchandise.
4. The best typeface for maximum visibility and legibility is called _____.
5. A price that is less than the regular price, or indicates a markdown or savings over the normal selling price, is called _____ pricing.
6. In checking corrections, edit sign copy for _____ and _____.
7. _____ policies are largely designed to prevent misleading price information.
8. A comparative price that indicates a final reduction or end-of-season closeout of a group of items or one lot can use the term _____.
9. When the term *regular* is used in comparative pricing, it must refer to the _____ price.
10. In fabric terminology, when a weave is used, it must be accompanied by the correct _____ used in that weave.
11. A trade name for a particular fiber must appear alongside the _____ it identifies.
12. The two most popular sizes of sign cards are _____ and _____.
13. A quarter-sheet-sized card is most useful on a mass display of _____ merchandise, and it measures _____.
14. For institutional and announcement signs, the preferred size is _____ or _____.

15. Most retailers prefer sign cards with a single typeface, printed in _____ ink on _____ card stock for good readability and visibility.

Projects

1. Write the sign copy for the merchandise described following Project 2. Compose the lead-in, main head, and sales copy. Show these as separate lines on your paper and identify each line.
2. Make a layout of the sign copy you wrote in Project 1. Show the exact size of the sign, the

position and size of each line, and the typeface style you select.

Description of merchandise for sign copy:

For the late spring buying season that includes weddings, graduation, vacation, and summer outdoor living, the buyer has made a good purchase on a patio table and chair sets. These are made of heavy-gauge steel, primed with rustproof paint, and finished in a glossy white or yellow enamel. The tables are round, 42 inches in diameter, and are made to take an

umbrella that can be purchased separately. The four chairs in the set have arms and cross-braced legs. They also have removable cushions with vinyl covers that wash clean with a damp cloth.

The table and four chairs are sold as a set at \$124.95. The normal selling price for merchandise of this quality is \$159.95, if perfect. These sets have very minor imperfections in the weld joints of the seams that in no way mar their strength, durability, or finish.

Using the guidelines for copywriting found in this assignment, compose sign copy for this merchandise.

12

Effective Use of Display Properties and Decorations

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment, you will be able to—

- 1. describe display props, decorations, and their uses in a presentation of merchandise;*
- 2. describe at least two classes or kinds of props and how they can be used in a display; and*
- 3. create a display design, using standard props and decorations to enhance the presentation of merchandise.*

Terms to Know

prop—an abbreviation for property. It describes any object or device that supports, enhances, or becomes a part of the design, theme, or presentation of merchandise.

build-up—a class of display prop that consists of several sizes of the same shape and configuration. It can be made into many designs, or can be used singly.

patina (puh TEEN ah)—a surface finish that changes and grows more rich in tone and color with age. For example, bronze turns green with age and exposure. This is its patina.

silk screen—a printing process in which the ink is put onto paper through a stencil covered with silk or a similar, fine-meshed cloth. The result is a textured surface of colors that blend and create a "poster" effect.

Display Properties and Decorations

A display *property* is most often abbreviated and spoken of as a

"prop." It is any device or fixture used for making a display arrangement more attractive by enhancing the appearance of the merchandise. Props are necessary to any display arrangement.

A *decoration* is any trim or device that adds interest, color, and enhances the design of the display. Decoration has no other purpose in display except to add interest or enhance the display. Thus it makes the merchandise more appealing and, therefore, more desirable.

Decorations and props have a place in displaying merchandise. But they must always be used to *support or enhance the merchandise*, not just the arrangement or design. The greatest mistake that an inexperienced display worker makes is to use too many props and decorations. Then they can overpower and detract from the merchandise.

The Use of Props and Decorations

The trend today in both window and interior displays is to use only a few props and decorations. Except to carry out a theme, most window displays concentrate on using props simply to give interest

and design to the merchandise arrangement. But some props are necessary to carry out a particular theme. Figure 1 is a good example.

In this display of teakettles, small artist's mannequins have been used in a *humorous or whimsical* fashion. They serve no purpose other than lending interest to a group of items that have no particular personality. The small mannequins actually become the theme since they tie the display together and give it function and purpose.

Figure 2 is an example of how a very simple prop can create attention and interest. Here, a discarded washtub from a junkyard has been stuffed with straw to form a nest for a peacock. The rough texture of the tub is in direct contrast to the fine feathers and colors of the peacock. It is also in direct contrast to the shiny, bright cookware set. You do not have to make a mental association between the prop and the merchandise. The prop simply arouses interest and draws attention to the merchandise.

Types of Display Props

Very large stores usually have a central display or prop shop. It is

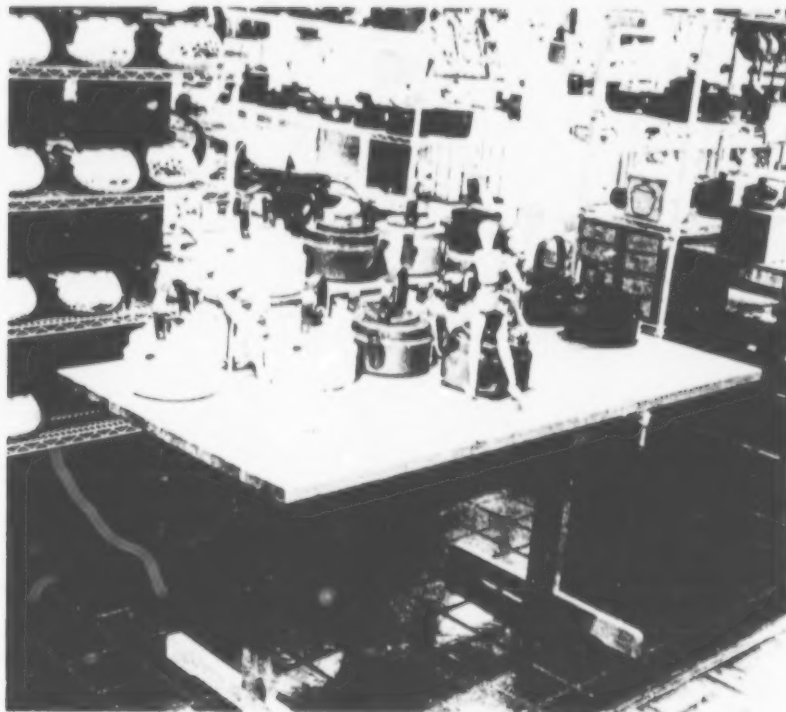


Figure 1. Display props carry out the theme of the design. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

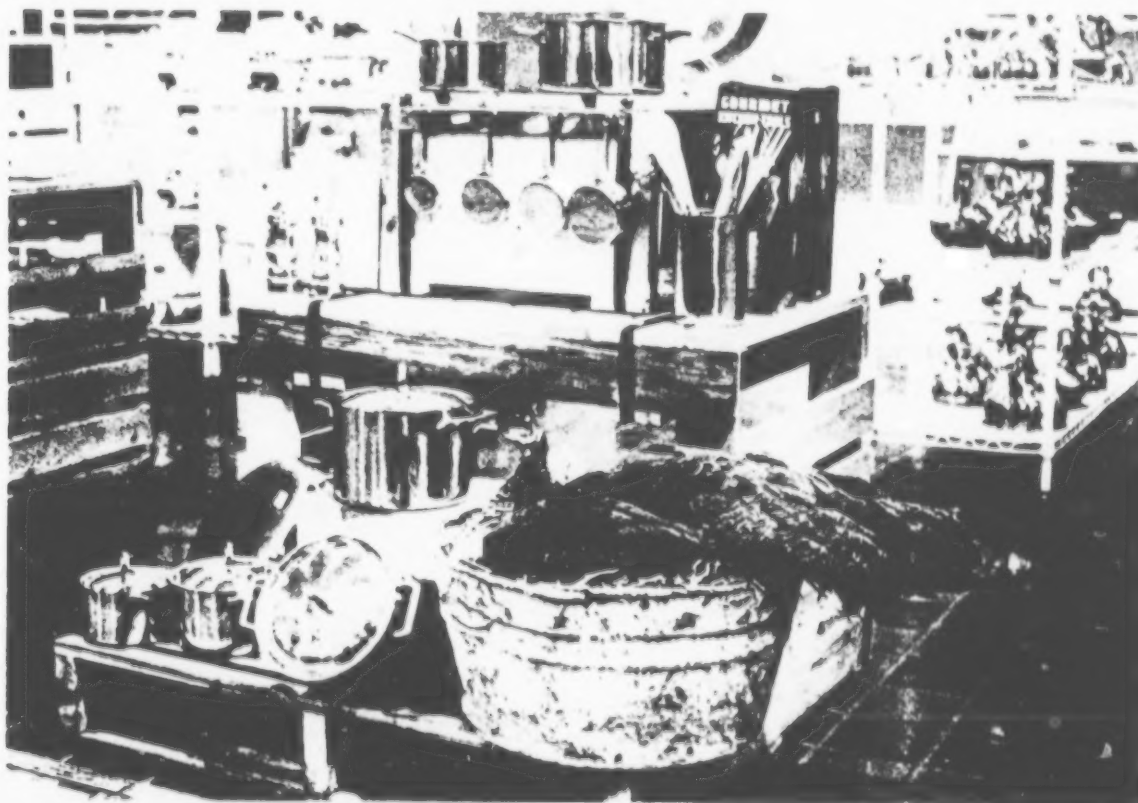


Figure 2. Props and decoration can be very simple and inexpensive, yet very effective. In this example, a discarded washtub and stuffed peacock offer visual interest and contrast to the gleaming pots. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)

staffed with power tools and equipment, plus skilled craftspeople who are excellent carpenters and cabinetmakers. Their job is to create props for display purposes. By the skillful use of wood, plastics, metals, wire, glass, and paper, they can create any type of prop or decoration desired.

Few stores have access to this kind of equipment and human labor for creating props. They are usually available from the same resources that make fixtures, mannequins, and other display needs. Most props can be bought and used over a long period of time. They are a part of the ongoing display and merchandising budgets.

To justify the expense of these items, you must think of props and decorations as doing for a display what a fixture does for merchandising. Props and decorations should be durable, versatile, flexible in use, well made, attractive, and adaptable to many different situations.

Props and decorations do not have any particular system of classification. They can be lumped together in several categories, or by design, or by kind of materials. Decorators and display personnel maintain a file of catalogs from various manufacturers and index these in many ways, depending upon the individual preference. For example, props might be classified by design or decor. Traditional, colonial, oriental, contemporary, and novelty are examples. They can be classed according to their types, such as risers, columns, cubes, screens, build-ups, tables, and urns, as examples. Decorations are too numerous to classify.

Most commercially built props are made from durable materials with superior finishes. They are designed for complete versatility and flexibility of use. And they are adaptable to any kind of merchandise, season, promotional theme, or degree of fashion. They have a long lifespan. This makes them inexpensive, when used over a period of years. If props are carefully chosen and selected for their useful-

ness, they have no age factor. They do not go out of style or become out-of-date. So they should be simple in design and structure.

Many commercial display companies send their sales staff around to make calls on local display and visual merchandising directors. They show new items such as props, decorations, mannequins, fixtures, and trim. However, it is much better if the director goes to market to actually see and inspect these new items. There are three major market showings each year. These are in San Francisco in the spring, and New York in June and December.

Styles and Construction

Display props should harmonize with the total visual merchandising look of the store. If all other fixtures and decor are contemporary in style, then the props for display should add to that look. The props should fit with the image the store wants to project to its customers.

Acrylic cubes, columns, and risers (see fig. 3) are sturdy, versatile, and harmonize with almost any style or decor of display design. They can be stacked, or used in groups, as singles, in windows, and interiors, as well as in point-of-sale displays. Crates, columns, and cubes (figs. 4, 5, and 6) show how wooden strips can be used in a variety of styles. These can be purchased plain and finished in any way desired. They can be repainted again and again, or left plain. Figure 7 is a latticework screen that can serve as a portable background. It can also be used as a fixture to display a variety of accessories, or to hold a poster, a spray of flowers, or whatever is desired.

Build-ups are a series of cubes, cylinders, or free-form shapes that are used together to form different display structures. Figure 8 shows a series of onyx (AHN icks—semiprecious stone cubes), polished to a rich luster. These may be used singly or in any numbers for any kind of grouping. Figure 9 shows a series of cylinders used for the same pur-

pose. These are constructed of plywood and are covered with metallic-finished vinyls. The cylinders lock together and can be used as mannequin risers or merchandise display platforms.

Sometimes, simple objects can become excellent display props. Figure 10 shows a series of glass bricks used as build-ups. To add color and interest, these bricks can be filled with colored marbles, glass beads, candies, or other similar items.

Furniture and furnishings also become display props. Figure 11 shows rustic, casual chairs that can be converted to hold any type of wearing apparel in a display. These chairs have a richness and rustic charm that contrast well with better lines of fashion goods. These are made in Mexico from rough, split cedar (which adds a pleasant aroma). They are covered in pigskin that takes on a rich patina with age. Tables also make excellent display props. Figure 12 shows a series of oak and carpet-covered tables. These come in many design shapes and are good for presenting various types of merchandise.

Decorations

Decorations are used to add interest to a display or to contribute to its theme. In most cases, a decoration does not hold or present merchandise. It is something added to the display arrangement.

Decorations must be chosen carefully and should fit into the theme or atmosphere of the arrangement. They must contribute to the display, not distract from it.

Decorations can be sophisticated. They can also be gaudy and trite. The real purpose of a decoration should be to establish an atmosphere or image. The decoration itself does not have to be an actual contributor to the display arrangement. But it must add interest and increase the desire and appeal of the surrounding merchandise.

Wall decorations are popular and can be used as display props in windows as well as on interior

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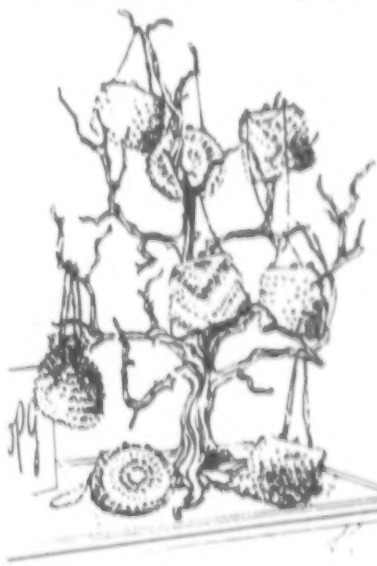
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An unusual piece of driftwood that has been refinished and made into a display prop. (Courtesy of Sears, Roebuck, and Company)

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Figure 3. (Courtesy *Display Creations Catalog*)

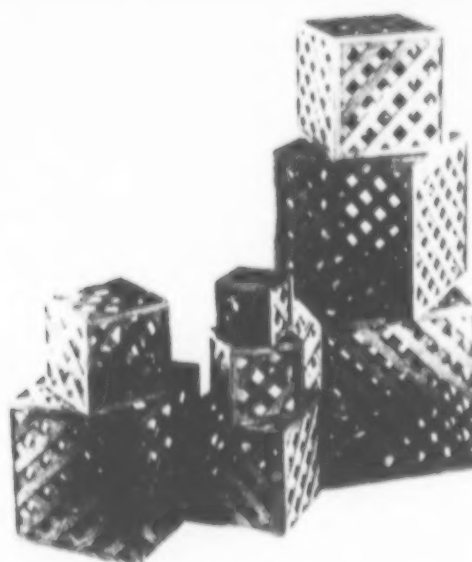


Figure 6. (Courtesy *Display Creations Catalog*)

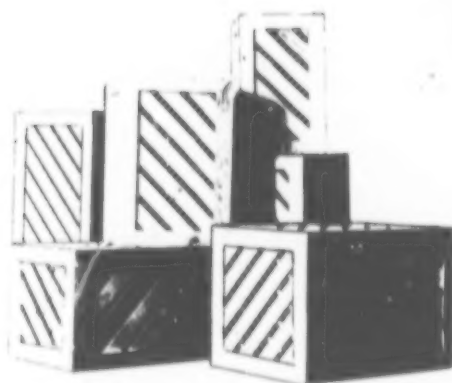


Figure 4. (Courtesy *Display Creations Catalog*)



Figure 5. (Courtesy *Display Creations Catalog*)

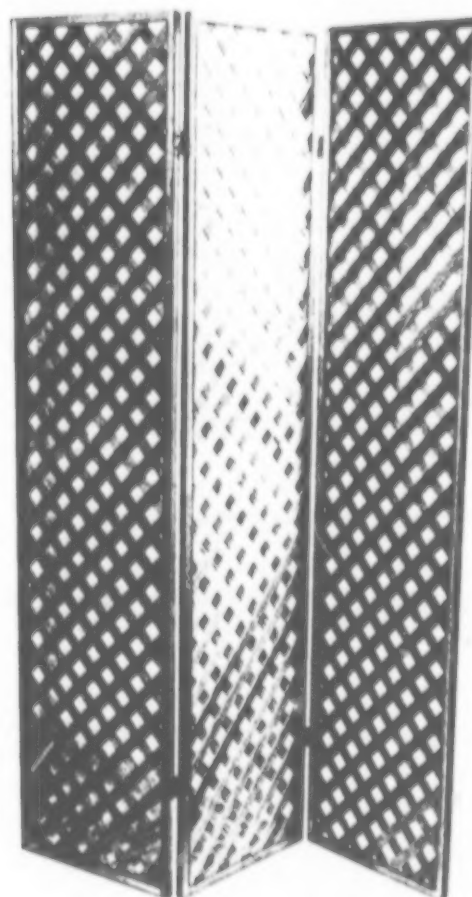


Figure 7. (Courtesy *Display Creations Catalog*)

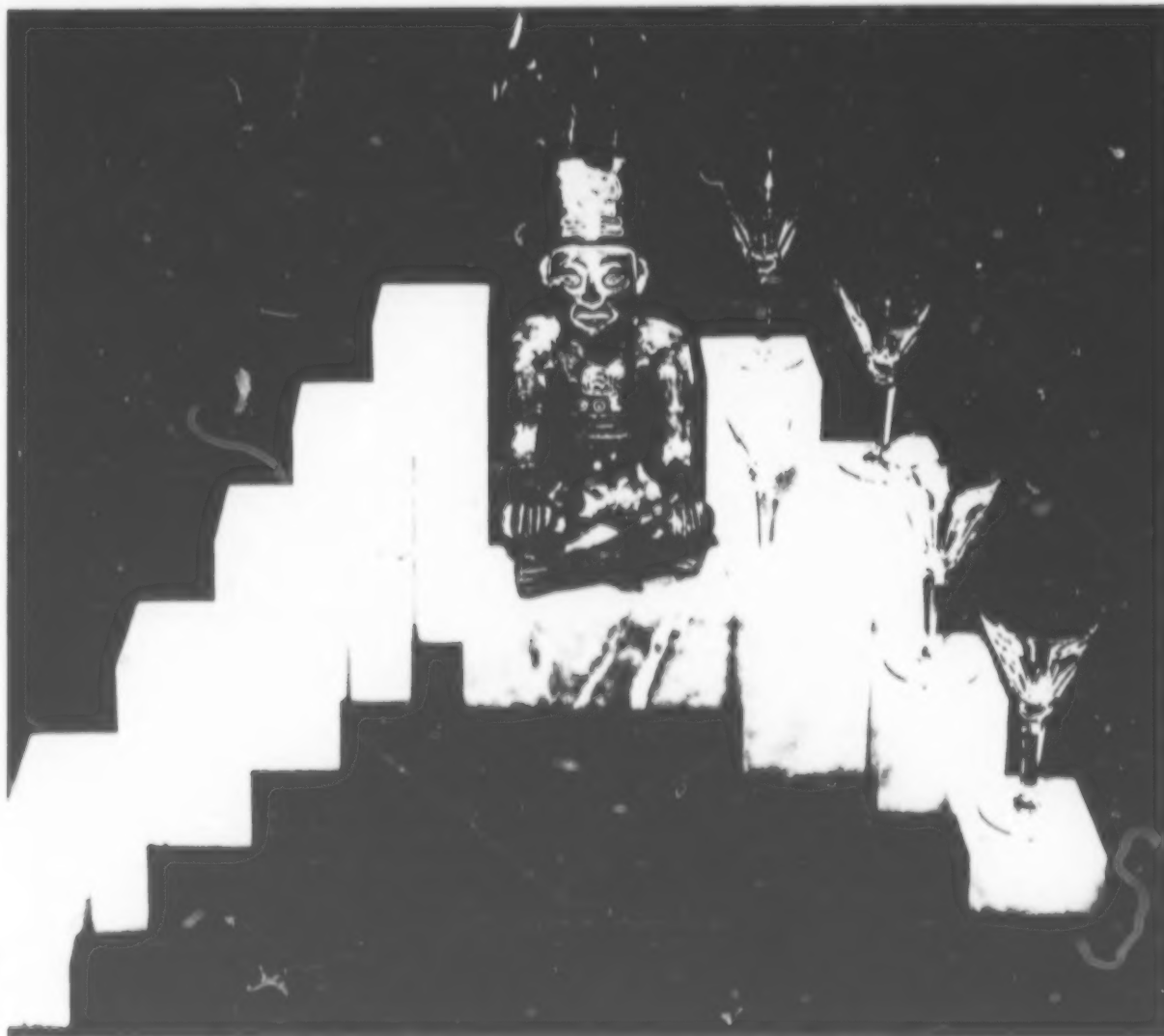


Figure 8. Onyx blocks as build-ups (Courtesy Susan Crane, Inc., Dallas)

walls. Figure 10 is a collection of such pieces, all of which have a masculine appeal. These are molded plastics that give an air of medieval pomp. They will dress up any men's wear department or college shop.

Novelty Items

Some items are so unusual in nature that they demand attention and interest immediately. These are novelty decorations. They have a limited, but useful, nature in most retail store display. Figure 11 is an

example of such an item. You may put your imagination to work now and see how and where you would use a 1920s gas pump in your own store.

While it may be a reproduction, the gas pump dispenses liquids, candies, or any other small item. It can be permanently bolted into place on a floor inside of a department, or can be used in a window display. It is unusual and novel because it is completely out of place and out of character in a retail store. Many antique items fall into this category and are marketed as display decorations.

Creating Display Props

Many stores are large enough to have their own creative department, store decorator, and property shop. In these stores, many of the display props and decorations are created or constructed on the site. This is the truly "fun" part of display work because it is creative. You see your own designs take shape, and you can work toward the final results.

Creative props and decorations constructed in-house do not have to be elaborate or expensive. Rolls of construction paper, plastics, and



Figure 9. Cylindrical forms as mannequin base and interlocking build-ups (Courtesy Susan Crane Catalog)

a small amount of wood can make an endless variety of designs. Figure 2 is a good example of what can be created at low cost, quickly, from an in-house display prop shop. The art of working with display papers is exciting. Many props and decorations are created from paper-folding techniques. You might do well to obtain a book on the Japanese art known as *origami* (ORE uh GAHM i), or creating objects from folded paper.

Plywood sheets have many uses in creating original and custom-fitted display props. They are easily worked, cut into intricate shapes, and sanded, painted, or covered

with paper, vinyls, and metallics. Sheet plastics and acrylics are easily worked and made into boxes, cubes, cylinders, build-ups, platforms, and bases.

Shipping crates and cartons can be saved, refinished, and made into props. Barrels, sawdust, excelsior, rope, and building materials are all useful in creative work. For example, you may want to create a waterfront pier for a window theme that features imported merchandise. The rough-hewn timbers, lumber, rope, wooden crates, and barrels make an excellent contrast to the fine imported merchandise displayed on these props. The con-

trast sets off the merchandise and makes it appear even more attractive because of its surroundings.

Upsilon board is probably used more widely today than any other material. The 3/16-inch thickness is generally preferred. It is less expensive, and easily cut, sawed, drilled, covered, and painted. It is used for pads, for riser tops, makes excellent cubes, and can be cut into a wide variety of shapes.

Another popular material today is the foam-core board, faced on either side by smooth-surfaced poster board sheets. It is very lightweight, is easily cut and worked, painted, or covered. It can be bent



Figure 10. Molded plastic decorations have many uses. (Courtesy Lorwood Decoratives)



Figure 11. A novelty decoration (Courtesy Susan Crane catalog)



into curved shapes, and is a highly versatile material. Its chief drawback is that it is not as durable and will not withstand heavy weight, scuffing, kicking, or punctures.

Carpet tubes are highly versatile for making display props. They are very heavy, durable, and easily covered. They have endless possibilities for creating unique shapes and configurations. The larger tubes can be cut into short lengths and used as risers. Smaller tubes can be covered to resemble candy canes at Christmas. These tubes are normally thrown away by the carpet department. So you should always have several on hand for use all during the year.

You should learn to look everywhere for possibilities. Useful objects that can be converted into display props and decoration are all around you. Interesting pieces of driftwood, weather-worn lumber from the sides of old barns or fences, rusted hardware, and pieces of fence wiring are all interesting. And with a little touch-up, these can be turned into fine display props. A visit to local "flea markets" and garage sales can produce many interesting and inexpensive objects for display. Look for antique furnishings, old glass and bottles, children's toys that look old or antique, and similar items that have decorative possibilities.

Papier-mache is a useful technique for producing all types of original and creative props. Newsprint and paste are inexpensive. Forms can be made from wood and

hardware, cloth, screening, or "chicken wire" fencing. A little time, some paint, and your own creative talents can transform papier-mache into many sources of decoration.

A silk-screen process printer can also prove quite useful in making posters and screening designs on paper backgrounds, coverings for cubes, cylinders, and folding screens. Silk screening is fast and inexpensive. And designs are both colorful and fresh to fit in with any decor or mood you want to create.

If you desire to be creative in constructing and designing your own display materials, you have many possibilities and resources. And most of them are either free or very inexpensive. There is little need to spend a lot of money on props and decorations that have limited uses. Save those funds to purchase props and decorations that will last for a long period of time. Make sure they are adaptable to various merchandising functions.

Projects

1. Select any window or interior display in your training station to observe. Prepare a drawing or sketch of the display, showing the various props and elements in the design. Include the merchandise, since it is the most important element. What are the props? Give a description of each, and tell which type it is.

How is each made? What are the materials? Are the props commercially made, produced in-house, or from a collection of props in the display storage area?

How does each prop fit into the overall design or theme of the display? Do you think each achieves its purposes of helping the arrangement and giving interest to the merchandise? What would you add or take away to make an improvement? Tell how the display would be improved with your changes. Prepare a brief report and include the sketch.

2. Select any item of merchandise or group of related items you would use to create either a window or interior display. Design a display and make a drawing or sketch of it. Show which props you would use in addition to the mannequins (if any) and the merchandise.

Remember to keep your design simple and direct. The merchandise is most important, not the props and decoration. You may select props that you already have on hand in your training station. Or you may decide to build one, or obtain one easily and inexpensively.

Be creative, but also be practical. Let your training sponsor criticize your design and make suggestions for improvement before you attach it to this assignment.

13

Display Planning, Design, and Coordination

Objectives: When you have completed this assignment you will be able to—

1. explain why display is one of the most important jobs in the entire store organization;
2. tell who is responsible for planning and creating displays;
3. contrast the visual merchandising objectives of a nationwide chain with an independent specialty store;
4. name four sources of display ideas and their themes;
5. define a merchandising theme, and tell how it is used to help promote merchandise;
6. explain how a promotion or campaign is coordinated to get maximum results; and
7. create an original design idea or merchandising theme that can be used in your own training station.

Terms to Know

archaic (ar KAY ik)—ancient; from the past; outdated.

cohesiveness (ko HEES iv ness)—the act of staying together; togetherness; close support for one another.

graphic (GRAF ik)—relating to pictures, drawings, photographs, or any medium that illustrates by drawings rather than words.

media (ME di uh)—the plural of medium, referring to the method of advertising or promotion, such as by newspaper, by radio, by television, or by direct mail. These are the different media.

salon (suh LAHN)—a highly sophisticated or stylish business or shop for fashionable merchandise; an exclusive place of business.

Visual Merchandising Responsibilities

Your main responsibility in a store is to help sell merchandise. That is more important than looking at your job as just display or decorating, or whatever your job title may be. If you keep this main goal in mind, it will help you greatly in career development.

Because you are involved in visual merchandising, you have a heavy responsibility. You must make the store constantly attractive. The entire store appearance, including displays, merchandise, fixtures, lighting, signing, and props become your immediate concern. You may have that responsibility, yet not be involved at all in any of the merchandising or promotional planning. As a display worker, you probably will get

your daily tasks and assignments from the display director or manager. Carrying out the planning, assignments, display calendars, and other promotional activities is just as important as doing the planning.

To be successful on any job, you must know your job and how to perform it. But, more important, you must also believe that your job is important and that what you do really matters. Your job in visual merchandising is one of the most important jobs in the store. What you do, or don't get done, really matters.

Customers are going to be attracted, or turned off, by your displays and all other related activities. The customer's decision to buy or not to buy is directly influenced by displays, signing, lighting, and arrangement. Themes are

important. The professionalism of your work shows up and everyone sees it. Not very many employees can say that about their jobs. It is encouraging to know that you and your work have visibility and great importance. So you need to carry out your responsibilities well.

Planning Responsibility

Someone must be responsible for carrying out the planning and scheduling of displays and other visual merchandising activities. Depending upon the individual store and its organization, it usually falls upon the display director to plan and schedule. This is usually done along with the merchandising manager, promotion manager, advertising manager, or other people connected with overall merchandising activities.

Most stores today approach planning on a seasonal basis, using a three-months planning calendar. The seasons are winter, spring, summer, and fall. For many stores, holidays are not promoted as extra events but are included in the seasonal calendar. Selling and merchandising seasons are not always aligned with the regular calendar. For example, fall and winter merchandise appears in late August and early September. In January, spring merchandise is shown. Vacation and summer merchandise appears in midspring.

So merchandising is always ahead of the normal season of the year. Planning and scheduling are commonly done three months or more in advance of actual need. For this reason, display people must always think in terms of seasonal advance, not the current time.

Who plans the actual display? It will depend upon the store, the organization, and the amount of experience of the display worker. In most cases, displays that promote a particular event or a seasonal theme are planned for particular departments or merchandise groups.

A storewide event such as an anniversary sale, for example, might have a unifying theme of "Thirty-Fourth Anniversary Sale." This same wording, with a logo or stylized lettering, would be used as the unifying theme on every display throughout the store.

A "Back-to-School" theme would not necessarily be found in every department. Thanksgiving and holiday festivities may be found only in a few selected displays, with tabletop merchandise, for example.

If a display worker is fairly new and inexperienced, the entire display may be planned by the director. He or she would furnish the entire plan, complete with a sketch, floor plan, layout, signing, lighting, mannequins, and merchandise. For a more experienced display worker, the director may only indicate the department, merchandise, and theme or signing. The details of props, arrangement, and decoration would be left entirely to the worker. The more experienced display worker may have a complete choice in details and planning, simply carrying out the overall wishes of the director.

In large chain store organizations, themes, display layouts, signing, and other details are planned in a central location. The intent here is that one retail unit should look very much like another. As an example, you can instantly spot the uniform visual merchandising of a Sears, Ward's, or Penny's retail store. This is purposeful. Most display workers in these organizations carry out the overall seasonal planning of the central office. Signing, fixturing, themes, and POS merchandising achieve a uniform appearance.

Originating Display Ideas

Outside of a large chain organization, visual merchandising attempts to create a unique character and atmosphere. A federated department store does not want to look like an allied department

store. A Neiman-Marcus does not want to look like a Lord & Taylor. A specialty store wants to have its own distinctive appearance.

Much time and effort is devoted to creating merchandising and displays that achieve this distinctive look. Even within one independent store, the same merchandising effort is not put into "bargain basement" departments that is put into the designer salon. So display workers must always be aware that their role is to create distinctive, unique, and different merchandising looks.

How are display ideas and designs created? Very few ideas are "new." Almost everything we do has been influenced by something else we have seen, heard, or experienced. In the same way, there is really nothing "new" in display design.

Creative people are always on the lookout for ideas they can put together, change, and polish into something different. One of your jobs as a display artist is to look for new ideas or ideas that you can use. You can spend hours or days at a drawing board trying to create some unique display design. Or you can build a file, be observant, and constantly seek ideas that will save you much time. The following are major sources for creating display ideas:

1. *Build a display file.* File ideas by category or theme or object. Endless ideas can be found in public library books. Purchase the Dover Publications books for a great variety of historical designs. Designs from every period of history, including alphabets, ornate trim, borders, art, and fashion are covered. They have books on trees, flowers, wildlife, and nature subjects. And all of these are copy-right-free. So you need not worry about direct reproduction.

Subscribe to leading home and fashion magazines. If you cannot order these through your display budget, then get outdated copies from friends and fellow employees. Or look through the used

book and magazine stores. Tear out ads, pictures, and drawings (from books you buy and use) that have some potential for display design.

Look for trade magazines and art magazines. Try to find back copies of the *Art Director's Annual Awards* magazine, photography magazines, and the performing arts, theatre, movie, and television magazines. Many picture services, clip art for advertising, and other similar sources are available.

Don't overlook magazines that deal with travel, nature, history, and the printing industry. Business magazines are other good sources. In other words, get the habit of collecting, looking through, tearing out, filing, and cataloging ideas, art, photographs, advertising, drawings, or any graphic rendering that will be useful later on.

2. *Observe your competition.* Other stores have visual merchandising and display ideas. Visit and look with the "eyes of a thief." There is nothing wrong or unprofessional about noting what others have done. You can reuse those same ideas for your own store. You should never try to duplicate exactly. But you can take an idea and redesign it for your own merchandising needs.

You can even take along a small sketchpad and jot down some ideas after you leave the competitor's store. You can walk down a street and look at other stores' display windows. You can casually walk through a store or shop. Look all about you at what is going on. If you are an artist, you will observe buildings, parks, people, public buses, civic improvements, construction, remodeling, and a host of other activities that you may want to file for later use.

3. *Become a scavenger.* As you walk about in the city, in the country, around your neighborhood, while on vacation, or any place you happen to be, look for things you can use. Old signs that people

have discarded have display possibilities. Visit "flea markets," salvage centers, and junkyards.

A good camera can be a great help. Take photographs of old circus posters, sides of buildings with layers of peeling paint, unusual signs, construction sites, street barricades, parades, old barns and farm buildings, junked cars, as well as all the new, contemporary things.

4. *Don't overlook the obvious.* So many things surround you constantly and are so familiar that you tend to overlook them for design ideas. Small art galleries may become sources for lending paintings, drawings, sculpture, and pottery to the store for display purposes. In return, they will receive publicity and credit. Many factories have unusual products they manufacture that can be used as props and decorations. Sunday newspaper comics, old posters from theatres and stage productions, not to mention the wardrobes that local acting groups have

on hand, make great props. Visit museums, public libraries, and newspapers for discards or objects that might be loaned temporarily for display purposes.

Following a Theme

Most merchandising efforts, including displays, have a distinct purpose apart from selling merchandise. Every season has something new and distinctive, whether it is in fashion, in furnishings, in hard lines, in current events, in local events of public interest, in human interest stories, in sports events, or anything that has general public appeal. Merchandising looks for the pulse or throb of human interest and tries to capitalize on it for promoting merchandise. Whatever it is that stimulates people's interest can become a theme (fig. 1).

The *theme* is the one unifying factor that ties all merchandising efforts together and gives them a purpose. A theme can be an event,

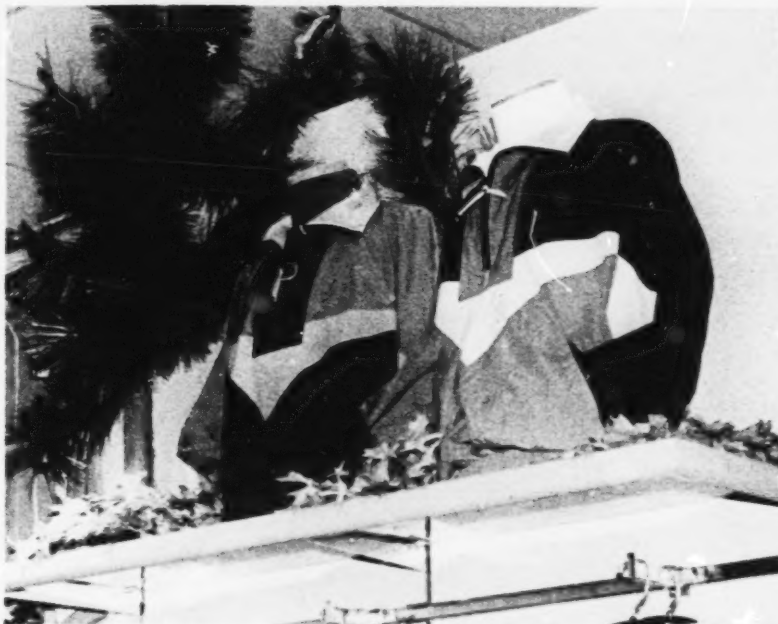


Figure 1. Props such as seasonal greenery can be placed in or near displays to carry out a store-wide theme. (Courtesy of J.C. Penney, Highland Mall, Austin, Texas)

a color, a culture, a country, a season, a sale, or any idea that is carried forward through each display, in the fixturing, signing, props, and decorations.

Themes do not have to be related to events of worldwide and national importance. They can be quite simple, yet provide background for distinctive and unique merchandising. For example, let's assume that many fabric prints this season are of abstract colors and designs. Picking up on that, the display artist visualizes that abstract art can become the vehicle for the theme. Visiting a local art museum, an arrangement is made to borrow abstract paintings for use as props in displays. These paintings carry through the idea that the fabric designs in the fashions and furnishings are "works of art." The design possibilities are endless. They depend only on your imagination, taste, and the availability of merchandise to come to life.

Figure 2 illustrates a simple nautical theme. The theme does one thing. It conveys an idea that the fashions on display are ideal garments to wear on vacation. *Sailing, ships, and vacation* are ideas that people associate with one another. A certain amount of romance is connected to sailing and ships. And this captures the imagi-



Figure 2. This display carries out a nautical theme. (Courtesy Foley's, Austin)



A mannequin display that carries out two themes at once. The large plastic acorn is repeated in window displays and in other displays throughout the store, heralding autumn. The shopping bags have the legend "Spirit of the American Woman" and also appear in several displays. (Courtesy of J.C. Penney, Highland Mall, Austin)

nation. The customer knows that she can look good in these fashions without getting aboard a ship or taking a vacation. The idea or theme simply adds zest or romance to the shopping trip.

Coordination of Merchandising and Promotion

Themes and promotional events are not just the responsibility of display workers. Rather, promotion is a coordinated effort. In involves merchandising, selling, advertising, display, public relations, and other coordination personnel. Plans are made together, and each department carries its assignment and responsibilities along with other departments. This gives harmony and cohesiveness to the entire effort. Every employee and department knows what is going on and works in a united effort.

Many people are drawn into a store by advertising. A promotional theme can begin here. Or it may begin with a direct-mail campaign, or a combined advertising effort that includes several different media. The store's exterior and windows may carry through with

the same theme to capture and build interest. Once inside, the total visual merchandising effort carries through with the same theme.

Repetition is a powerful stimulus to sales. If you repeat something often enough, it becomes a compelling factor. People accept it, and want to become a part of whatever is popular or acceptable at the moment. This is why all promotion and merchandising must be coordinated.

In another example, a back-to-school promotion includes a panel of fashion "experts" from each school in the community. The panel is made up of student leaders, both male and female, who set the fashion scene for the school year. These people then take the fashions to the campus by putting on style or fashion shows, with the aid and promotion of the store's fashion coordination team, public relations staff, advertising staff, and of course, the display department. Display sets the stage for the fashion show with props, signing, and staging scenery.

Students are given the clothing, accessories, fashion notes, and narration copy by the fashion co-

ordinating team. Everything is under the direction of public relations. The news media covers the event with the prompting of the advertising department. This is total coordination of promotion (see fig. 3).

In another example, a local county or regional fair is a good place to display many different kinds of products, mainly furnishings and hard lines. It is a good place to show major appliances for freezing and preserving farm produce and for preparation of foods. Home sewing centers, special equipment, and various time-saving aids might be shown.

The displays are done in a coordinated effort with the fair promoters, the public relations staff, merchandise managers, and promotion managers.

Again, if it is a truly successful promotional event, it will be perfectly coordinated by a number of different departments, each with different responsibilities. Salespeople will be on hand to talk to prospective customers, make referral cards, and do followups that will result in good sales.

Questions

1. Why is your job one of the most important ones in the organization?
2. Who has responsibility for planning displays when the display worker is new and inexperienced?
3. How do chain store organizations achieve a look of uniformity with their visual merchandising?
4. How does visual merchandising help achieve a distinctive look for an independent store?
5. Name four major sources of creative display ideas.
6. Explain briefly what a *theme* is and how it is used in merchandising.
7. How is a promotion coordinated to get maximum results?

Projects

(Select any one)

1. The promotional event is entitled "Carefree Feeling." It is storewide in scope, covering every merchandise department. The theme is hot-air balloons, both old-fashioned and mod-

ern. The idea is to "get that carefree feeling" with _____ (merchandise) _____.

Each department can use a subtheme that ties in, such as "get up and get away," "light on your feet," "get a lift with —," "the sky is the limit," "lighten your day," and so on.

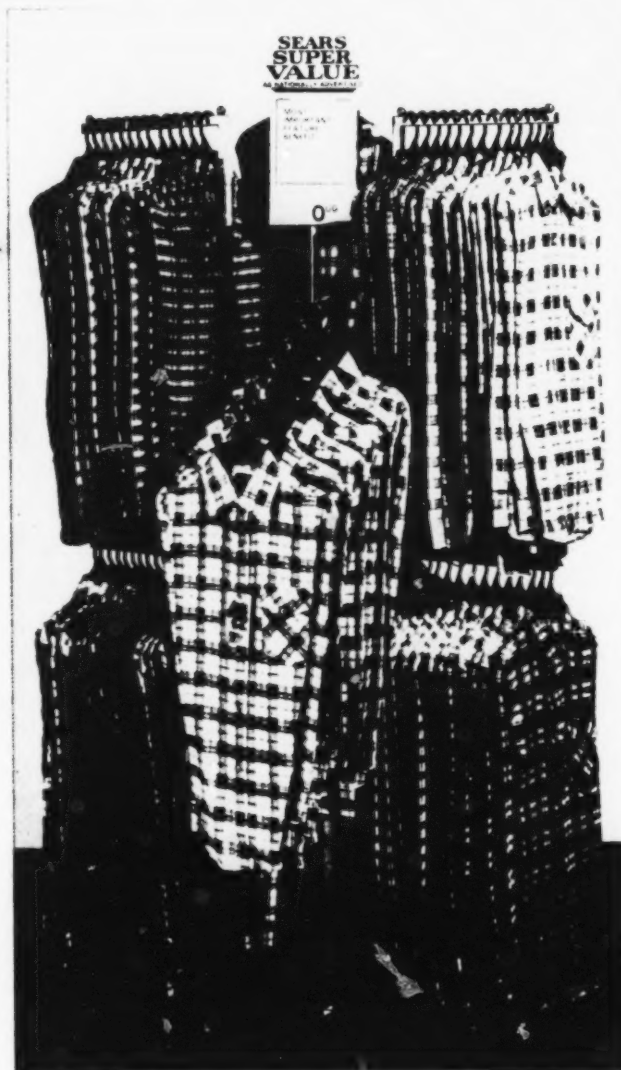


Figure 3. A merchandise display that follows a storewide theme (Courtesy Sears Roebuck, and Co., Chicago)

Your job is to design a display for any kind of merchandise that you select. Sketch a simple plan, showing the sub-theme, the art, props, and decorations, along with the merchandise, accessories, if any, fixtures, and appropriate signing. Assume that you have the responsibility of designing your own display. The sketch is for final approval of the display director.

2. Assume that you have the responsibility of setting up a display at a county fair that has a western or "country" theme. Your booth is 10 feet deep and 20 feet wide. Draw a floor plan sketch showing the arrangement of merchandise (any merchandise of your choosing), props, decorations, and sign-

ing. Be sure to show the store name and logo because you will be competing with other stores and merchandise for attention. Let your imagination flow freely. Be innovative and original. Try looking through magazines and books for ideas.

3. Originate a theme of your own for any kind of merchandise or for a storewide promotional event. Look for ideas in other stores or from an outside source. Choose some local civic event or one of national or worldwide significance. Or use a season, a holiday, or any theme that comes to mind. Be original. Don't copy something that's already been done. Here are some ideas to stimulate your imagination:

- Imported merchandise

from Canada or Mexico

- Cruise around the world; fly around the world
- Fiftieth anniversary sales (gold)
- Open season on deer
- Fourth of July
- Football kickoff to fall fashions
- Ski time or winter playland

After you have decided on the promotional event, come up with the exact wording. Suggest displays for at least three different kinds of merchandise. Include the signing and suggestions for props and decorations, if any. Assume that you are the visual merchandising director, and this is the plan you want carried out by the display department.

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- (1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;
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- (3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;
- (4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;
- (5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- (6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and
- (7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

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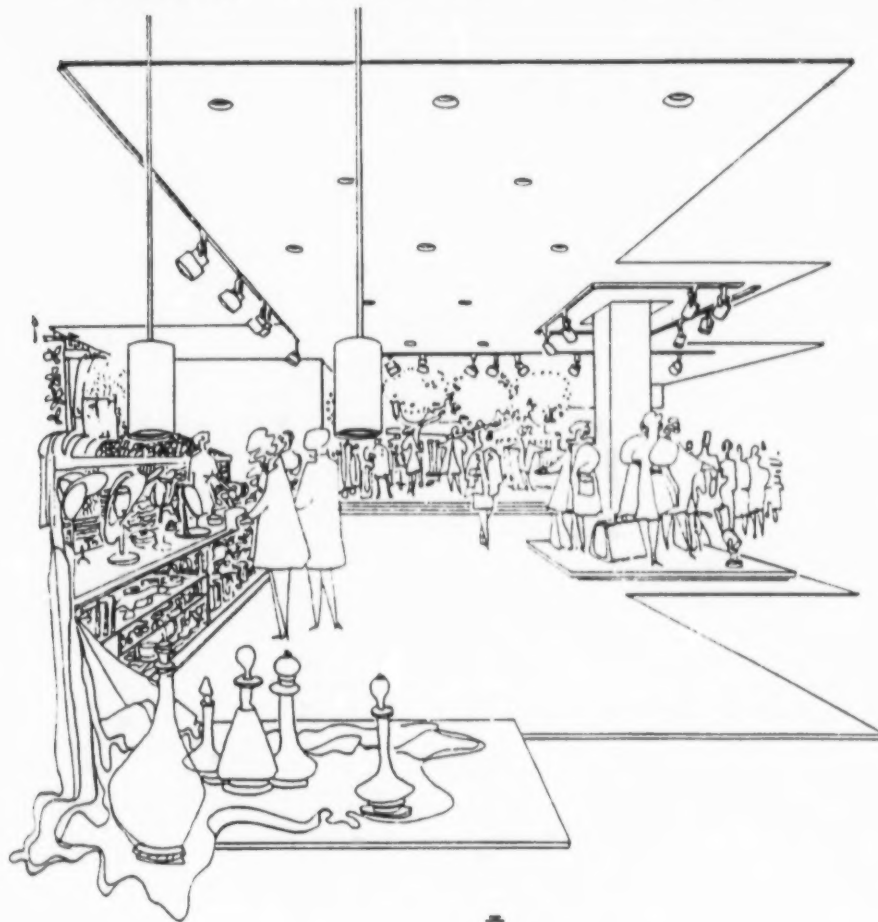
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basic visual merchandising

second edition

answer book/teacher's guide



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Basic Visual Merchandising

Second Edition

Answer Book/Teacher's Guide

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I. Using *Basic Visual Merchandising* for Independent Study and for Classroom Instruction

Basic Visual Merchandising, Second Edition, features content needed to do tasks related to visual merchandising. Because of its broad coverage, it can be useful to students in entry-level jobs, to employees who are already in higher-level positions, and even to unemployed students who are just considering this area of marketing as a career. For students in co-op training stations, it is related to the approvable occupational category of Advertising and Display Services, 11650650.

The student's manual is a revision of an earlier, highly successful publication by the same name. It has been shortened to make it more easy to fit into current courses that are already rich in content. The content is appropriate to entry-level, master employee, and even supervisory-level employees.

It will be advantageous for the teacher to read Assignment 1, which sets a tone for the rest of the book. The first assignment relates basic visual merchandising to the goals and other activities of promotion. This enlarges the view of the student as to what can be accomplished by coordinated efforts among store personnel. It encourages looking at visual merchandising as a manager might do. The assignment also stresses the need for using the higher-level thinking skills when doing visual merchandising. It gives example of requirements for each of the skills—knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Assignments in the student's manual have questions that cover specific information, but they also feature activities which have students visit specific stores and observe what is currently being done. Use of higher-level thinking skills is encouraged by such activities. The activities do not require that students have jobs. They ask for reports, which can be either written or oral as determined by the teacher. The activities will take varying lengths of time, so teachers should analyze them for how they fit the learning situation.

The content in *Basic Visual Merchandising* can serve two purposes. It can be assigned as independent study related to specific tasks done on a job. Or it can provide information for classroom coverage of visual merchandising.

To help make both uses possible, this *Answer Book/Teacher's Guide* replaces the usual answer book format provided in the past. It has information that is needed for planning and presenting instruction. A number of benefits result from new features in this publication.

For efficient planning of instruction, there is a list of assignments and their objectives. These provide a quick review of what might be taught in class, or what should be considered when making and grading assignments. By reviewing this material carefully first, the teacher will find it easier to see how the manual's content relates to various lists of tasks done on the job, and to other information being covered in the course.

To make the manual valuable for presenting specific Marketing Education courses, the related essential elements for those courses are provided.

For developing training plans and planning related instruction, there are short lists of tasks for entry-level jobs that include visual merchandising responsibilities.

To relate manual content to supplemental materials available from the MarkEd Resource Center, there is a list of key competencies based on foundations of marketing and functions of marketing in the National Curriculum Framework.

To show how the manual relates to training on a job, a sample training plan is provided. However, because content is not task-oriented, it may be necessary for the teacher to make considerable adaptations for individual situations.

To help in using the manual when preparing for DECA competition, there is information on DECA publications and competition in this area.

For efficient grading, there is a substantial answer key.

1. Assignments and Objectives in *Basic Visual Merchandising*

Assignment 1: Visual Merchandising: What They See Is What They Buy

1. Give the goals of promotion.
2. Explain what visual merchandising is and how it fits the promotion picture.
3. Discuss the other activities of promotion and how each contributes to a successful promotion mix.
4. Give three objectives of visual merchandising.
5. Discuss two basic ways merchandise can be presented.
6. Tell how various jobs in marketing are related to visual merchandising.

Assignment 2: Skills and Knowledge Needed in Visual Merchandising

1. Describe the duties and responsibilities of a display worker.
2. List the skills that a display worker needs to be proficient.
3. Briefly describe the duties and responsibilities of a display manager.
4. Name at least two related jobs that have display or visual merchandising responsibilities.

Assignment 3: Safety and Security in Visual Merchandising

1. Describe the special precautions to observe to assure your own personal safety in display work.
2. List the hazards and precautions to observe when working on a ladder.
3. Tell the danger areas of a display window area and how to avoid serious injuries there.
4. List the safety rules of a display shop and storeroom area.
5. Describe how to erect a safe display, including mannequins, props, and merchandise.
6. Name at least five security precautions in display work.

Assignment 4: Developing Display Themes

1. Describe the characteristics of a theme and what it should do in a display.
2. Tell what ideas and topics themes are based on.
3. Write and develop themes for any given product or service.

Assignment 5: Visual Merchandising for Self-Selection

1. Name three reasons why retailers have moved toward self-selection of merchandise.
2. Explain how prepackaging and hang tags aid in self-selection merchandising.

3. Describe how fixtures promote self-selection.
4. Describe or sketch a point-of-sale merchandise unit.
5. State the purpose of a merchandising guide.
6. Name six considerations that guide you in preparing a self-selection merchandise unit.

Assignment 6: Fixturing

1. List nine materials commonly used to manufacture fixtures.
2. List five types of standard units and two types of specialty units.
3. Name three decisions that must be made when choosing fixtures.
4. List three questions to ask when weighing cost against benefit.
5. Name three qualities to look for in fixturing.

Assignment 7: Elements of Window Display

1. Tell when and where a window display is most effective.
2. Give the main purposes of a window display.
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of an open-back window.
4. Name the major advantages of the closed-back window.
5. List the elements of window design.
6. Contrast unit and related grouping.
7. Define color harmony, monochrome, and color contrast.
8. Explain why signing is important in a display.
9. Tell how a display should be inspected when it is completed.

Assignment 8: Point-of-Sale Merchandising

1. Define point-of-sale (POS) merchandising, and tell what purposes it serves.
2. Describe the kinds of props used in POS merchandising of fashion goods.
3. Tell how special packaging designs aid in POS merchandising.
4. Name four other uses for POS merchandising.
5. Relate the role of display in POS merchandising and how it is used in special shops and boutiques.

Assignment 9: Effective Use of Lighting

1. Name the two purposes of lighting in the retail environment.
2. List the three types of lighting.
3. List five types of incandescent lamps and three types of HID lamps.
4. Name the three qualities that make a lighting fixture versatile.
5. State which two of the three types of lighting are suitable for accent lighting.
6. Name two purposes for which automated lighting controls could be used.

Assignment 10: Effective Use of Mannequins

1. List the three basic types of mannequins.
2. List at least four types of forms.
3. Name the two materials most commonly used to manufacture mannequins today, and the three most commonly used in the past.
4. Name the two things a buyer should look for when selecting a mannequin.
5. List four things to look for when judging the quality of a mannequin.

Assignment 11: Merchandise Signing

1. Tell which areas of signing need specific policies.
2. Compose good sign copy, following the recommended guidelines.
3. Prepare a sign layout, showing approximate size, typeface, and type size.
4. Cite some of the truth-in-advertising recommendations for comparative pricing, fiber and fabric identification, and use of trade names.
5. Name the standard sign sizes that fit standard sign holders.
6. Describe some important procedures to follow in printing and maintaining signs.

Assignment 12: Effective Use of Display Properties and Decorations

1. Describe display props, decorations, and their uses in a presentation of merchandise.
2. Describe at least two classes or kinds of props and how they can be used in a display.
3. Create a display design, using standard props and decorations to enhance the presentation of merchandise.

Assignment 13: Display Planning, Design, and Coordination

1. Explain why display is one of the most important jobs in the entire store organization.
2. Explain who is responsible for planning and creating displays.
3. Contrast the visual merchandising objectives of a nationwide chain with an independent specialty store.
4. Name four sources of display ideas and their themes.
5. Define a merchandising theme, and tell how it is used to help promote merchandise.
6. Explain how a promotion or campaign is coordinated to get maximum results.
7. Create an original design idea or merchandising theme that can be used in a specified store.

2. Marketing Education Essential Elements Related to Content in *Basic Visual Merchandising*, Second Edition

This publication has content related to three sets of essential elements promulgated by the Texas State Board of Education in 1988. Students using this publication will most likely be enrolled in Marketing Education I or Marketing Education II, the two first general courses in Marketing Education. In addition, some students may be in the two-to-three-unit course on advertising and display services, for co-op or lab situations. A list of all the essential elements for that course is provided below, because this manual may be one of the main publications for such a course.

Marketing Education I Essential Elements (b)

- (12) Successful employment and/or postsecondary training
 - (C) demonstrate effective communication skills, oral and written
- (16) Concepts and skills relevant to the specific occupational objective of the students

Marketing Education II Essential Elements (c)

- (2) Promotion
 - (A) identify types of promotion
 - (B) develop an annual promotion plan and campaign
- (6) Careers in marketing
 - (A) develop the skills and attitudes needed by marketing professionals
 - (B) explore career opportunities in marketing
- (7) Specific marketing career objectives

Advertising and Display Services Essential Elements (d)

These elements are related to the advertising content of such a course. They are addressed in *Advertising Basics and Careers*, available from EIMC.

- (1) understand that the ultimate goal of advertising is to sell goods and service
- (2) recognize that advertising plans and schedules should be based upon factual information
- (3) select the advertising media best suited to the product or service being advertised
- (4) identify advertising objectives
- (5) develop an overall campaign strategy
- (6) develop a theme or idea for an advertisement

- (7) analyze problems associated with advertising, copywriting, layout, and media
- (8) write attention-getting copy

These elements are addressed in *Basic Visual Merchandising*, Second Edition.

- (9) understand that the role of displays is to sell merchandise
- (10) demonstrate the fundamentals of good display, such as use of color, harmony, balance, and proportion in display construction
- (11) develop displays using seasonal or storewide themes

3. Tasks Done on the Job Related to Visual Merchandising

The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, 1977 edition, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides the following information related to occupations in visual merchandising. Its listing is for a "displayer, merchandise," but it also gives the titles of "store decorator or display trimmer." This person—

- Displays merchandise, such as clothes, accessories, and furniture, in windows, showcases, and on sales floors of retail stores to attract attention of prospective customers.
- Originates ideas or follows suggestions or schedule of display manager.
- Constructs or assembles prefabricated display properties from wood, fabric, glass, paper, and plastic, using hand tools.
- Arranges properties, mannequins, furniture, merchandise, and backdrop according to prearranged plan or own ideas.
- Places price and descriptive signs on backdrop, fixtures, merchandise, or floor.
- May dress mannequins for use in displays and be designated model dresser.
- May be designated according to area trimmed or decorated, as showcase trimmer or window dresser.

4. Key Competencies for *Basic Visual Merchandising*

The information in this publication is related to selected competencies listed in *Competencies and Job Tasks for Advertising and Display Services*, published by DECA Related Materials (now DECA Images) in 1988. The publication is available from that organization at 1908 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. The DECA competency list for Advertising and Display Services includes both concepts and tasks/skills. Competencies are based on occupational research compiled and synthesized by the Marketing Education Resource Center. Details on methodology and related publications are available from Marketing Education Resource Center, Inc., P.O. Box 12226, Columbus, Ohio 43212-0226. Telephone number is (614) 486-6708.

The complete list is based primarily on the "promotion" function of marketing (including advertising, visual merchandising, public relations, and sales promotion), along with the "core" general marketing competencies.

However, what follows includes only basic visual merchandising competencies and the general competencies for promotion.

Visual Merchandising

- Explain the use of visual merchandising
- Explain the use of visual merchandising to create image
- Explain the relationship of merchandising and visual merchandising (display)
- Explain types of display arrangements
- Develop color scheme
- Construct display backgrounds
- Select and use display fixtures
- Explain the use of vendor support/display aids
- Explain supply and fixture purchase considerations
- Explain sign printing/production procedures
- Letter display signs
- Design display signs
- Design preliminary display sets
- Design special-purpose displays
- Prepare merchandise for display
- Arrange display products
- Dress and assemble mannequins
- Adjust/install display lighting
- Maintain display workshop area
- Explain recordkeeping procedures for display storage
- Assemble displays
- Maintain display records

Maintain displays
Care for live plants
Dismantle displays
Decorate business/department

Promotion

Explain the role of promotion
Explain the types of promotion
Explain the concept of promotional mix
Explain the use of brands and trademarks
Explain the use of slogans

"Visual Merchandising/Display" is also a topical division of the promotion (PR) function list used in the MarkED database that is based on the National Curriculum Framework.

5. Information on DECA Competition and Publications

National DECA has individual series competitive events at the master employee level in "Advertising and Display Services." Representative job titles for those events are given as display assistant, advertising assistant, copywriter, layout person, window trimmer, media salesperson, and advertising solicitor.

Through DECA Images you can order related materials such as student training guides, copies of past comprehensive exams, competency-based competitive events handbooks, manuals containing competencies and job task lists, and comprehensive exam software for IBM PCs, Apple II, TRS-80, and Macintosh. The materials as well as information on competition are listed in *The DECA Guide*, which is revised each year. Current copies of *The DECA Guide* are available from DECA Images, 1908 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091. Telephone number is (703) 860-5000. Fax number is (703) 860-4013.

6. Sample Training Plan

Basic Visual Merchandising, Second Edition, is one of several publications that can be used to give a well-rounded training to students with responsibilities for this marketing function. The following training plan is correlated to three such manuals.

Visual Merchandising Assistant

These are tasks that might be performed by an employee assisting in the display department of a store. Students will benefit from doing most of the assignments in *Basic Visual Merchandising*, Second edition, 1991.

Recommended Occupational Experiences	Where Done		Related Study Assignments
	On the Job	In Class	

EIMC manuals cited for these experiences include *Basic Visual Merchandising* (BVM), Second Edition, 1992; *General Merchandising* (GM), Second Edition, 1990; and *Color Fundamentals of Marketing* (CFM), 1980.

Operating tasks			
Follow store rules, policies, procedures			
Follow safety precautions			BVM 3, GM 5
Follow fire prevention precautions			
Display, fixture maintenance			
Select fixtures best suited for specific uses			BVM 6, GM 5
Arrange fixtures, following sketches or instructions			BVM 6, GM 5
Arrange light fixtures for specific effects			BVM 9
Prepare self-selection merchandising units			BVM 5
Arrange and work with fixtures			BVM 6
Select, dress, and arrange mannequins			BVM 10
Use props in point-of-sale merchandising			BVM 8
Display construction			
Consider customer safety when planning and building displays			
Use tools for building displays			
Use spray paint booth			
Prepare sign layouts			BVM 11
Write sign copy			BVM 11
Sign displays			BVM 7, 11
Plan window and other displays			BVM 7, 12
Inspect completed windows			BVM 7

Display planning		(BVM has specific ideas)
Sketch point-of-sale merchandise units		BVM 8
Use merchandising themes for display		BVM 4
Know and use sources of ideas and themes for displays		BVM 4
Work with colors effectively		BVM 7, CFM 4
Design window displays and other displays		BVM 7
Plan a display campaign		BVM 13
Create merchandising plan for a specialty shop, department, or store		

II. Answer Key

1

Visual Merchandising: What They See Is What They Buy

Questions

1. What are the two goals of promotion?

The promotion function has as its goals attracting potential customers to a business and causing them to buy its goods, services, or ideas.

2. What are the five types of activities in promotion?

Promotion activities include visual merchandising, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling.

3. What is the name for the plan that describes how the various activities of promotion are to be used together?

This plan is called the promotional mix.

4. What are three objectives of visual merchandising?

The objectives are (1) to attract people to the store, (2) to present merchandise in ways that make people want to buy, and (3) to help build or maintain the image of the store.

5. What are the two basic ways that merchandise can be presented?

Merchandise can be set apart, by placing it in displays. Or it can be placed on fixtures to make it easy to see, handle, and inspect.

6. What type of display is a cross between a display and a fixture?

A point-of-purchase or point-of-sale display is a cross between a fixture and a display.

7. What thinking skills are involved in visual merchandising?

The skills involved include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

8. What types of employees may be involved in visual merchandising?

A variety of employees have some responsibility for visual merchandising in stores. Much of it can be done by persons who aren't specialists. Sales associates and stockers are likely to place merchandise on fixtures, and maintain those fixtures.

9. Why is it important to check carefully when anticipating a career specializing in the design and construction of displays?

More stores today depend on ready-to-set-up displays.

Skills and Knowledge Needed in Visual Merchandising

Questions

1. List 10 general duties of a *display worker*.

Ten general duties of a display worker are these:

- (1) Design and install displays of selected merchandise.
- (2) Follow recommended display designs given by the display manager.
- (3) Assemble, dress, and group mannequins.
- (4) Construct, paint, cover, and arrange display props.
- (5) Effectively arrange and group merchandise within a display.
- (6) Assemble and arrange fixtures following a preselected plan.
- (7) Construct, assemble, and install point-of-sale displays.
- (8) Request signs and copy for displays.
- (9) Stock and store all display props.
- (10) Clean and maintain all display areas, including windows, showcases, ledges, and wall units.

2. Describe what is done in planning a display.

In planning a display, the worker refers to a display schedule, or to the requisition received from the merchandise department. The worker determines the type of display needed, the nature of the merchandise to be displayed, and the physical location of the display. The worker either makes up his or her own design, or follows the suggestion and plan given by the display manager. The worker then confers with the appropriate department head to get the merchandise and have it properly prepared for display.

3. What duties are involved in assembling display materials?

In assembling display materials, the worker goes to the storeroom or warehouse to select the appropriate props and decorative materials. The worker either transports these to the display site or has them brought over. If props must be built in the shop, these are requested from display carpenters (or built by the display worker, in some cases.) Forms and props are covered with appropriate fabric, paper, plastics, posters, or whatever material is needed; some are painted. The worker selects the appropriate decorations and accessories to accompany the display.

4. What are the major duties in setting up a display?

The worker lays out and assembles the display elements according to the display plan, sketch, or blueprint. The worker assembles mannequins with correctly fitting garments. Then the garments are pinned so the fit is adjusted to the mannequin.

Mannequins are grouped, assembled securely, and are placed in a safe area. Merchandise is arranged on the props and forms in an effective manner. Signs and

artwork are placed where needed. Lighting is installed in the proper manner. The worker requests professional assistance when needed in setting up difficult displays.

5. What related visual merchandising duties does the display worker have?

In visual merchandising, display workers help set up special shops within departments that sell selected groups of merchandise. An example is the "Campus Store" featuring schoolwear, wardrobes, and accessories for young students. These are seasonal or semipermanent in nature, and may change two or three times a year. Trimming, decorating, displaying, and fixturing are all part of these duties.

6. Name the major kinds of special skills that a display worker should have or develop.

Purely artistic abilities are not as necessary now as they once were, but today's display worker still needs artistic ability in designing and planning a display unit, following plans or sketches and blueprints. The worker must be able to arrange display elements and the merchandise that goes with them. An excellent color knowledge is mandatory, including the ability to use color harmonies and contrasts, keyed lighting, and proper backgrounds for effectiveness.

The worker must be able to fit garments and accessories to mannequins and forms, and know how to create special effects with garments. An ability to mount, suspend, and secure various props to support the weight of the merchandise is necessary. In many cases, the worker must know how to build or fabricate props and cover them with appropriate materials.

Signing is another needed skill, including the ability to operate a sign press or hand letter with a brush, pen, and ink. Last, the worker must know how to use basic hand tools used in display work. These include handsaws, coping saws, hammers, staplers, pliers, screwdrivers, and various types of fasteners.

7. What are some of the strenuous physical activities of and dangers to a display worker?

A display worker spends much time climbing on ladders, stooping, bending, lifting, and reaching into difficult places. Working inside display windows is very confining and extremely hot. There is also the danger of falling off ladders and through the glass if one is not very careful.

8. Briefly describe the major duties of a *display manager*.

Briefly, a display manager has the following major duties:

- (1) plans, directs, and coordinates the design, fabrication, installation, and removal of all displays;
- (2) plans, directs, and coordinates the assembly and disassembly of fixtures and special shops within departments;
- (3) attends planning conferences with merchandise managers, buyers, and sales promotion staff;
- (4) originates and prepares sketches of proposed displays and related materials;
- (5) oversees and directs the work of the display shop and sign shop;
- (6) secures and prepares adequate storage space;
- (7) prepares and controls visual merchandising budgets;

- (8) oversees and coordinates special promotional displays and special events, such as style shows, civic events, fairs, and so on;
 - (9) contacts manufacturers and suppliers for POS materials; and
 - (10) hires, trains, and supervises an adequate display staff.
9. Name some other jobs that either require display abilities or are directly involved in display.

Other jobs requiring display abilities or involvement with displays are: whole-sale field merchandising, including salespeople, agents, jobbers, or representatives; commercial decorators or designers; display and banner designers; and display artists.

Project

(Select the project that applies to you)

1. If you are presently employed in a training station, do the following:

From your training sponsor, get a current job description of a display worker, noting any major differences between it and that described in the assignment. Also obtain an organization chart showing where the display or visual merchandising department fits into the total operations and its relationship with sales promotion, merchandising, and sales. You may have to draw an organization chart if a copy is not available. Attach these items to this assignment.

2. If you are not employed, or if you are not presently engaged in any display or visual merchandising duties, do the following:

From the job description of a display worker, which duties seem most challenging and interesting to you? Which skills do you already have, and which will you need to develop? What can you begin doing now to develop the skills required in display and visual merchandising? In what area do you plan to develop these skills? What future career do you plan for yourself, and how will these beginning duties help you in preparing for your future? Answer these questions in a brief summary and attach it to this assignment.

Safety and Security in Visual Merchandising

Questions

1. What are the two greatest dangers a display worker faces in normal, everyday duties?

The two greatest dangers a display worker faces in everyday duties are (1) falling from high places, and (2) muscle and back strain from stooping, bending, lifting, climbing, and twisting.

2. How do most injuries occur in the performance of duties?

Injuries occur from improper lifting, straining in an off-balanced position, falling from ladders and ledges, cutting with knives and power tools, and inhaling paint and chemical fumes.

3. What one safety rule will help prevent injuries and accidents?

The one rule that will help keep you alert and prevent an accident is: When you are working in an unnatural position or location, think through, ahead of time, what you are doing. If you are unsure of yourself or the condition, don't do it. Ask for assistance, or get another display worker to help you.

4. What is the proper method of lifting to prevent personal injury?

When you attempt to lift an object that weighs more than 20 pounds, face it squarely with your body. Off-balance lifting will probably result in pinched back nerves. If the object is lower than your waistline, squat down, bend your knees, and lift with your legs. Keep your back in a straight line. Never bend from the waist, and lift with your back muscles.

5. What should you look for in selecting a ladder for display work?

A display ladder should be made of wood. This is preferable to aluminum because it is stronger and more secure. Inspect all ladders before using them, looking for defects and broken or missing parts. Avoid using short step-stools because they will topple easily. Never go beyond the third step from the top. If the ladder is not tall enough, get one that is.

6. What safety rules should you follow when using a ladder?

Brace yourself with your legs when working on a ladder. If possible, use one hand to hold onto the ladder. If you must use both hands, get the ladder as close to the work as possible. Never use a ladder in a sales area where there is customer traffic. You may drop a hammer, staple gun, or display prop. You don't want a customer to accidentally bump your ladder while you are working.

If the ladder must be in a traffic area, have a helper hold the ladder and keep customers from underneath it. Block off a portion of a department where display work on a ledge, wall unit, or on top of a merchandising unit is taking place.

Never place a ladder in front of a door or entryway without a helper to guard the ladder. Never overreach. Don't attempt to get something that is out of arm's length or where you must lean away from the ladder.

7. What are the dangers of working in a closed display window?

In a display window, the glass is your greatest danger. It can break if you bump it, drop a tool, or fall off a ladder. Flying glass is the same as a flying knife blade. It can severely cut, stab, and injure both you and passersby on the outside.

All props and mannequins must be securely based to prevent their toppling into the window glass. Finally, the area inside a window can become very hot from floodlights, with little or no air circulation. Heat exhaustion can cause dizziness and fainting.

8. Under what conditions can you operate power tools?

You should never operate any power tools or equipment without proper supervision, instruction, or experience in their use. This includes power saws, shapers, lathes, drills, and routers.

9. Name some things to do that will make a display safe.

When installing a display, think especially about customers' safety. Never put a display where it will obstruct traffic. All props must be securely mounted and installed. Mannequins need special attention. They should be securely mounted on their support rods and bases. The removable arms, legs, and hands should be firmly seated in their lock rings.

Check all lighting to make sure no flammable materials are near it. Check items on the display. Heavy items should be at lower levels to prevent them from being knocked over. Banners and posters should be high enough to avoid hitting people in the head or eyes.

Finally, check a display when it is completed to make sure there are no pins, nails, wire, or tools left over. Check for loose props, mannequins, or for anything that may be hanging too low.

10. List five rules for display security.

Except where items are displayed in closed-back windows, follow these rules on security:

- (1) All garments should be pinned or tied onto display forms.
- (2) Only one shoe of a pair should be displayed.
- (3) All accessory items must be secured by pins, knots, or monofilament line.
- (4) Never put expensive jewelry on open display. Use inexpensive look-alikes that are secured to the form.
- (5) Treat an open-back window the same as an open display area.
- (6) Keep displays in high-traffic areas for added security.
- (7) Check out all merchandise with department heads, using a loan book or markdown book.
- (8) Make a habit of daily inspecting and cleaning a display.

Project

Give a description of the display workroom, shop area, and storage facility at your training station. What power tools are there? Is there a paint spray booth? Who is authorized to use these? Are any display properties built in the shop area? Is there a special display area for mannequins? What fire protection equipment is nearby or located within the display area? Is the "No Smoking" rule strictly observed by everyone in the display area?

Prepare a brief, written report, and attach it to this assignment.

Developing Display Themes

Questions

1. Explain why display is the "show and tell" of marketing.

During "show and tell" time in elementary school, a child presents and tells about some interesting object or event. In our modern world of marketing, display is the means of communicating a product, a service, or an idea by both presentation and communication.

2. Name three qualities a display theme should have.

First, a theme must be interesting. It has to be something that most people would know and be informed about. It can be humorous, but not ridiculous. It can be sophisticated, but not intellectual or scholarly.

It must be of current interest and concern to a large segment of the customer clientele.

Second, a theme must never be trite. It should not be an overworked or overused idea. It should be fresh and original.

Third, a theme should help sell merchandise. It is of little value to develop a theme that has nothing to do with the merchandise itself. The theme has to make sense. Yet it should be thought-provoking and suggest why the customer should buy now.

3. What rules should be followed in using *humor* in a display theme?

Humor must be funny without being ridiculous or offensive. It must never insult or put down anyone or any idea or organization. It must not slur or slander any group, race, or party. It must be subtle, yet obvious to nearly everyone who reads it. It must be appreciated. Otherwise, it will be self-defeating. Puns or plays on words make good humor.

4. Other than *humor* and *contrast*, what other ideas make good themes? List the characteristics of a good theme.

Many themes are serious, some are patriotic, some invoke civic pride and awareness, capture a current news event, or simply suggest a new way to use an old idea. Themes can be seasonal, geared to any of the national holidays and celebrations. They can be used to promote other countries and their products.

Themes can be based on current events and problems.

Themes may also be patriotic. Patriotism is not just the American flag and the red, white, and blue on the Fourth of July. It can be anything that promotes freedom, democracy, free enterprise, civic pride, support for local school teams, or builds confidence and promotes citizenship.

Themes may be objects such as antiques and unusual pieces. They may be topics of interest to the general public. Almost anything can become a theme for a display.

To be useful, however, it must have these characteristics:

- It must be well-known and familiar.
- It must be interesting.
- It must fit the merchandise.
- It must invite attention and arouse interest.
- It must have an appropriate message.

5. What are the rules for writing good copy and theme banners for display signing?

Writing good copy for display signing follows the same general rules as writing copy for advertising. It should have a heading or lead-in line, followed by two or three brief descriptive statements about the product. A good sign never tells the customer the obvious. Good copy must:

- attract attention
- arouse interest
- inform about unknown qualities
- give a reason to buy now
- tell the customer about the benefits of ownership
- state the terms and conditions for purchasing an item

Sales copy, unlike theme banners, must be straightforward and without frills. The theme banner and display attract attention, arouse interest, and capture the awareness of the customer. Sales copy should not use humor, puns, or words with double meanings. Communication must be very clear and specific in sales copy. It can still have zip and sparkle.

Project

To aid you in preparing display themes, the following exercise is suggested. It will be fun, challenging, and give you an opportunity to test your creative skills. If you need suggestions or help in getting started, consult your training sponsor.

Instructions: For each of the following examples, prepare at least one theme and theme banner sign for a display. Follow the rules and suggestions in the assignment.

1. a fashion ensemble in navy and camel (tan or beige)
2. a microwave oven
3. a coordinated set of golf wearing apparel
4. a gold and diamond watch
5. a silk blouse with a Chinese design
6. a pair of classic-style, sling pumps (for women's shoes)
7. a matching man's shirt and tie set
8. a fabric-covered lounge chair with heat and vibrator
9. a reversing-type ceiling fan
10. a small, portable foot-operated air pump

As an alternative, select 10 different products or services that you would rather use for themes. These should be a mixture of both hard line and soft line merchandise. Do not select all fashion merchandise, since it lends itself to themes more readily than other types.

Tell why you chose each product or service. Write a report, and attach it to this assignment.

Visual Merchandising for Self-Selection

Questions

1. Briefly summarize the three main reasons why retailers began using the *self-selection merchandising technique*.

- (1) Self-selection permits the decided shopper to quickly locate the right department and the right merchandise. It permits the casual shopper to browse, see the entire store, and perhaps make an unplanned purchase.
- (2) The economics of high labor and inventory costs have forced the retailer to cut costs wherever possible. Self-selection reduces the number of people needed on the sales floor. It also allows most of the inventory to be out front where it can be sold.
- (3) Today's fixtures are more durable and flexible than ever. They make self-selection easy, practical, and permit a new look without expensive remodeling through an effective fixturing system.

2. How does *prepackaging* aid in self-selection?

Many manufacturers use prepackaging as a means to help sell their goods without depending upon the efforts of individual salespeople. Prepackaging protects the merchandise and gives the customer needed information. Prepackaged items are more easily hung or displayed on merchandise fixtures.

3. How do *hang tags* aid in self-selection of wearing apparel?

Hang tags provide for wearing apparel what prepackaging does for smaller items. It gives the customer all of the necessary information on fabric, color, style, size, price, and care and use. Too many hang tags distract rather than attract attention. One well-designed tag is all that is needed.

4. Briefly explain how *fixtures* aid in self-selection merchandising.

Today's merchandise fixtures are designed for self-selection. Most are made of durable, attractive materials. They show merchandise items at maximum advantage. They hold large amounts of goods in a small amount of space. They have a flexible arrangement and layout within a given amount of space. They are easily set up and dismantled when necessary.

A good example of the change brought about by fixturing is in wearing apparel merchandising. A few years ago, many items were folded and laid on tops of tables or counters. Today, nearly all items are hung on special merchandise racks, including most of the related accessory items.

5. How important is *signing* in today's merchandising technique?

The sign is an important tool in self-selection. In the absence of prepackaged

items, a sign must give the essential facts to the customer. It must be prominent, yet not detract from the merchandising display.

Many are designed by the manufacturer as aids for setting up a display. These are called "point-of-sale" merchandising aids. A good sign gives the brand name or identifies the product, a few facts about the item known as sales copy, and the price.

6. What is the role of display in *point-of-sale merchandising*?

Self-selection is greatly enhanced when display arrangements are placed in the vicinity of the fixturing. In many stores, the merchandising guide for each department calls for a display on one end of the fixture. Many fixtures are designed for a display or mannequin. These permit the customer to inspect merchandise without having to open packages or take items off the rack.

7. What is a *merchandising planning guide*, and how is it used?

Many large companies have a planning guide for each department's merchandise. The guide is a layout plan for the entire department, plus a layout guide for each fixture or merchandiser. This gives a uniform look to the entire store. It ensures that each department achieves the total effectiveness of its merchandising.

The guide shows how each type of fixture is to be stocked. For example, on a multilevel fixture, featured items are on each end. The general line is displayed in the large, center section. Guides show how to merchandise sizes, colors, styles, fabrics, and patterns, when they apply.

8. In the absence of a standard merchandising guide, what six considerations should be made in self-selection?

- (1) Determine how much and what kind of merchandise needs to be shown, and how much can be grouped together.
- (2) Determine the number of items that need to be shown on a single fixture, or in a given amount of space.
- (3) Look at the layout and arrangement through the customer's eyes. Plan and group according to those things that are most important to the customer in making a selection.
- (4) Make maximum use of fixtures. Don't use too much or too little merchandise on each fixture.
- (5) Select appropriate fixtures for the type of merchandise.
- (6) Place featured or promotional merchandise in the most visible spot on the fixture.

9. What techniques can be used for large, bulky items of merchandise?

Large, bulky items present more of a problem in self-selection. But they can still be artistically arranged and placed in attractive areas. Large items are usually individually boxed. The cartons form the base of the display, and serve almost like a display table. Several models are selected, removed from cartons, and placed on top of the cartons as display models. To make self-selection effective, you must arrange the items in a neat, attractive grouping. Use signing to communicate the selling message.

10. Where can you get new merchandising ideas for self-selection?

Many resources offer new ideas in merchandising. Manufacturers design and provide many merchandising aids for their products. These are made available at the time of purchase, from the wholesale agent or supplier, or come with the items when received at the store. If a professional display shop is in the store, merchandising aids and signs can be built in-house.

Other resources are trade association publications, trade magazines, display equipment catalogs, pamphlets, brochures, printed sales literature, and an idea file or "morgue" built by the display person over a long period of time.

Project

If your training station uses a standardized merchandising guide for self-selection, obtain a copy, and attach it to this assignment. If you cannot get a copy, ask your training sponsor if you can trace it or sketch it. If such guides are not available, do the following:

1. Select one product line carried by your training station.
2. Select an appropriate fixture for that product.
3. Make a sketch or line drawing of the fixture.
4. Show how that product might be displayed or grouped on that fixture.
5. If color, sizes, styles, patterns, or quality grades are important in that product line, show on the sketch an appropriate grouping and arrangement. (Use the illustration in the assignment as a guide.)

Fixturing

Questions

1. List nine materials commonly used to manufacture fixtures.

Materials include chrome, aluminum, plastic, melamine, wood, brass, Plexiglas, and fiberglass.

2. List five types of standard units.

Standard units include tables, gondolas, showcases, racks, and wall units.

3. List two types of specialty units.

Specialty units include towers and cubes.

4. Name three decisions that must be made when choosing fixtures.

Decisions include whether they should be freestanding or built-in units, whether they should be standard or custom units, and whether they are for long-term or short-term use.

5. List three questions to ask when weighing cost against benefit.

Three questions are how long will it last, how much is your image worth, and how hard will it work for you?

6. Name three qualities to look for in fixturing.

Three qualities are good design, good construction, and ease of maintenance.

7. What are the components of a tubular system?

Components of a tubular system consist of various lengths of tubing.

8. What is the ideal time to make decisions about fixture purchases?

Decisions about a store's major fixtures should be made at the time the store is designed.

9. What are the advantages and disadvantage of towers?

Towers have a look of exclusiveness, desired by some retailers. But they don't hold much merchandise in relation to the space they take.

10. Why would a store consider purchasing custom fixtures?

Custom fixtures are purchased to meet special needs that can't otherwise be met.

11. What effect do long-term and short-term value have on fixture purchasing decisions?

Whether a fixture will have value over a short term or a long term has an impact on how much the store is willing to spend on it.

Elements of Window Display

Questions

1. In what kinds of stores are display windows most effective?

Downtown stores located where lots of people walk by them can still benefit from well-planned, creative, tastefully designed windows. This is very true in the large cities, but just as important in the small towns where major stores are located on "Main Street" or the town square. There is less need for them in the suburban areas where stores are located in shopping centers and malls.

Stores located in the vicinity of banks, theaters, office buildings, municipal buildings, transportation stations, or areas where large numbers of people walk by should consider window displays. Many workers in downtown areas "window shop" for pleasure and diversion before and after work hours, and during lunch breaks.

2. What two main purposes does a window display serve?

A window display has two main purposes. It creates an image or atmosphere for the store, and it should produce sales. Both are important. But unless a window is designed to generate sales and customer traffic inside, it is nonproductive.

3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of an *open-back display window*?

A window display with an open back has several advantages. It opens up the inside of the store to the outside. It lets in light to the front of the store. Its disadvantages are that it is more difficult to decorate, lets in heat that places an extra load on air conditioning, and has some security problems. Many open-back windows use open-meshed panels or glass in the backs to cut down on heat and to offer some security.

4. What are the major advantages of a *closed-back window display*?

The closed-back window offers much better design possibilities and creative challenge. The display worker can control the elements and setting, including background and side panels. Many windows have movable back and side panels, so the interior dimensions can be altered. Lighting and color can be created and controlled inside the window without interference from the store interior. The effectiveness of the display is entirely within the control of the display worker.

5. Name the elements of design.

These include *line, form, space, harmony, balance, contrast, color, and light*.

6. Where can you get ideas for display windows?

There are many sources for window ideas. First, scan all types of retail and

merchandising trade publications. Subscribe to those for display people, like *Visual Merchandising*.

Advertising in various media gives you good merchandising ideas. Start a picture file. Work up sketches. Observe other retail display windows. Look for ideas in nature and all around you, and file them away for later use.

7. How are themes used in window displays?

Many windows are created for a specific theme. Back-to-school, travel and vacation, bridal, graduation, and seasons and holidays are examples. Themes may be special seasons, current events, civic events, storewide promotions, or tie-in promotions with some other event. A theme may be a color or a pattern. A theme is almost anything that can be developed into a window design.

8. Contrast *unit* and *related grouping* of elements.

Unit grouping arranges elements into compact masses. Each unit should be easily identified and seen alone. A unit may include more than one item, but the eye sees items as a group and puts them together.

In related grouping, items may be displayed together or separately. But all items go together and are related to each other by the nature of the merchandise itself. Each has its own areas of specific interest.

9. How are *line* and *space* created in a display?

Lines or patterns are created by the grouping of the elements. The eye travels in the pattern that is created, moving up, down, at an angle, or in a circle. Spaces between the elements also form shapes and patterns.

10. Briefly discuss *repetition* as an element of design.

Repetition of line, shape, and space is a strong design element. Lines, shapes, and spaces are repeated in arrangement or grouping by the use of props, and by light and shadow cast on the backgrounds with the use of lights.

11. How is a *harmonizing color scheme* created?

Color harmony is created by mixing the neutrals of black, white, and gray with a dominant hue to get tones, tints, and shades of the same color.

12. How is a *monochrome* effect achieved?

Monochrome is the use of the same color throughout, including its tints, tones, and shades. Also the adjacent colors within the color wheel can be used.

13. What are *color contrasts*?

Contrasting colors come from opposite sides of the color wheel, but should not be used in the same amounts. They should be used to complement one another or as accents.

14. What essential elements of signing should be in a display window?

Somewhere in the window the store name and logo should appear. It is essential that the viewer knows whose store window has the display. Where a theme is

used, signs can be used to emphasize or carry out that theme. It is necessary to use signs to identify the merchandise, its features and benefits, the price, and where it can be found.

15. What are the four final inspection steps that should be made for a display?

First, the window and all its properties must be clean and free of smudges, fingerprints, dust, dirt, lint, insects, and webs. Second, check the display from outside and through the eyes of the people passing by. Look for minor flaws and things out of place.

Third, carefully check the merchandise for wrinkles, sags, slipped pads, pins showing, small details on mannequins, and props. Fourth, does the window have a message, and how well is it stated? Does it invite people inside?

Project

Select a single item of merchandise or a group of related items. These may be either hard lines or soft lines. They may be from your training station or from some other source. First, prepare a theme for a window display. The theme can be anything you choose. Next, prepare a sketch of a window design, showing the arrangement of elements, merchandise, props, and signing. Make either a unit or related grouping.

Use one of the window designs shown in the assignment for an idea if you cannot think of one. Have your training sponsor evaluate your design or help with the development if you have difficulty. Attach the design to your assignment.

Point-of-Sale Merchandising

Questions

1. Define *point-of-sale merchandising*.

Point-of-sale merchandising is the art of putting merchandise and their displays at the place of purchase, or where the customer makes a selection. In other words, the merchandise is made accessible to the customer for self-selection or selection with the aid of a salesperson.

2. What is the purpose of POS merchandising?

The purpose of point-of-sale merchandising is to make the merchandise attractive, attract customers' attention, and show the merchandise in its most attractive form, or in use.

3. What makes POS merchandising effective?

To be effective, a POS display must invite customer selection on the moment. It must do a good job of preselling. At least it should interest the customer enough to seek a salesperson's assistance in making the selection.

4. What props are best for POS displays of fashion merchandise?

In fashion merchandising, it is desirable to use single mannequins or forms for POS display. Torso forms, half-mannequins, blouse displayers, bust forms, and shirt boards are popular types of props. The smaller tubular or merchandise rack forms are versatile.

To place these props at eye level or above, the display worker uses risers, cubes, and similar props. They are usually kept simple in design and color.

5. Describe manufacturer-produced POS props.

Manufacturers often design and make available POS displays and signing materials. They reason that if these are colorful, easy to assemble and set up, and inexpensive, the retailer will more likely use them. Manufacturer-produced materials also give a look of uniformity to their products from one retail store to another.

6. Briefly describe how package designs are useful in POS displays.

Since hard line goods are usually more difficult to make into attractive displays, manufacturers have created colorful, informative package designs on the cartons of their products. These cartons form the basis for attractive displays and help induce customers to stop and look. The cartons form a base or riser for the products. And one or several models are removed and set on top for display.

Cartons invite customer selection, and they are easily taken from the display to the checkout counter. For the do-it-yourself market, many manufacturers print

step-by-step instructions and helpful hints on the package side panels or carton backs. These also encourage customer selection, and reduce the amount of signing that is needed.

7. Name four other uses of POS merchandising.

In addition to making merchandise attractive and easy to select, POS merchandising has these uses:

- (1) POS greatly increases impulse buying.
- (2) POS increases buying through related grouping of products.
- (3) POS is excellent for showing featured, seasonal, and advertised specials.
- (4) POS is excellent for suggesting new products or additional uses for standard products.

8. What is display's role in POS merchandising?

Display plays a major role in POS merchandising. Display helps create visual impact. Layout and design are also important. But if display does not do its job correctly, these carefully conceived plans will be of little value.

Display must select the fixtures, install the right accessories for maximum merchandising, and set the fixture in the proper location for best traffic. Display is responsible for using packaging, hang tags, and signing to help POS do its job.

Display is responsible for grouping related products and accessories. End panels and platforms are used to create attention-getting displays. Display workers must coordinate merchandise with special events, promotions, and advertising.

9. Describe the role of display in special shops and boutiques.

Shops and boutiques are special merchandise areas within a department. Most of them feature fashion merchandise, either home furnishings or wearing apparel. Display and POS merchandising play a big role in setting up the shop and giving it a distinctive look.

These shops require a flexible fixturing system that makes changeovers fairly easy and inexpensive. Special shop names usually require special signing of an elaborate nature. Grillwork, fancy paneling, special lighting, and other effects can set aside these areas. Displays should also be slightly more elaborate and decorative than in other areas.

Shops and boutiques require the best lighting and mannequins. They should look like they fit a designer series and high-fashion merchandise.

Projects

(Select one)

1. From your training station, select a special shop or boutique. Carefully observe the way in which the shop is merchandised and what displays are installed. How is the shop arranged, and how is it set aside as different from the rest of the department? Prepare a floor plan sketch that shows the approximate location of fixtures and merchandise groups. If possible, make a sketch of the shop itself. Show the special signing or logo that identifies it.

2. From your training station, select a hard line item that is packaged in an attractive carton. Make a sketch of a POS display of these cartons or design a display of your own. This should include the signing as well as any other display props that you think would enhance the display.
3. From your training station, select a soft line item. Prepare a sketch that shows one of the POS displays. Or design a POS display of your own, showing props, fixtures, and related grouping.

Refer to illustrations in this assignment for ideas. Attach the project to this assignment.

Effective Use of Lighting

Questions

1. What is a typical daily example of a use for each of the three types of lighting?

Incandescent lighting is commonly used in household fixtures. Fluorescent lighting is popular in offices and stores. High-intensity discharge (HID) lighting is often found for lighting along interstate highways.

2. Why is HID lighting so economical?

HID lighting gives the maximum lighting at the lowest energy use.

3. Why is incandescent lighting often a poor choice for overhead lighting?

Incandescent lighting creates much heat and is expensive.

4. What are downlights used for?

Downlights provide general lighting for aisles or other large areas.

5. What is track lighting?

Track lighting is based on fixtures sliding along a track.

6. Why are fluorescents a poor choice for accent lighting?

Fluorescents produce a softer, more diffused lighting not suitable for accent lighting. Also, their shape makes them impossible to aim.

7. How can general lighting affect accent lighting?

Bright general lighting can wash out some of the dramatic effects of accent lighting. Dim general lighting increases accent effect.

8. Why is accent lighting important in displays?

catch the attention of the customer.

9. How does the angle of light affect the appearance of a lighted object?

Lighting from above highlights and accents textures. Lighting from below casts extremely dramatic shadows. Lighting from 30 degrees above an object diffuses the light and illuminates the whole area.

10. What is the *main* problem associated with the heat from lights in displays?

Heat from lights fades fabric.

11. Name the two purposes of lighting in the retail environment

The two purposes of lighting are to provide general lighting and to call attention to specific merchandise.

12. List the three types of lamps.

Lamps include incandescent, fluorescent, and high-intensity discharge lamps.

13. List five types of incandescent lamps and three types of HID lamps.

The five incandescents are A-type, R-type, ER-type, PAR-type, and tungsten-halogen. The three HID lamps are metal halide, high-pressure sodium, and mercury vapor.

14. Name the three qualities that make a lighting fixture versatile.

The qualities are the abilities to swivel, remain in position, and adapt to a variety of accessories.

15. State which two of the three types of lighting are suitable for accent lighting.

Accent lighting is done by incandescent and high-intensity (HID) discharge.

16. Name two purposes for which automated lighting controls could be used.

Two purposes of automated lighting controls are to fade or bring up light intensity and to provide dramatic color at a preselected hour.

Effective Use of Mannequins

Questions

1. How long have mannequins been in use as models on which to display clothing?

Mannequins have been used to display clothes at least since the turn of the century.

2. Describe ways in which mannequins might be used in displays, *other than* for displaying clothing.

Mannequins add visual interest to displays, or add a human dimension.

3. Give an example of how mannequins reflect contemporary ideals of beauty.

Mannequins tend to reflect the idea of thinness being attractive, whereas most women aren't as thin as the typical mannequin.

4. When would it be appropriate to use a stylized mannequin, instead of a lifelike one?

A sculptured mannequin may make an artistic statement or a statement about the store's image.

5. How much do mannequins cost?

Mannequins can cost as little as \$100, but also as much as \$800.

6. Describe the proper procedure for storing mannequins.

To store a mannequin, first inspect it carefully then remove any dirt and repair any damage. Store the mannequin in one piece if possible, with the base stored separately. Store the wig in plastic bag. If storing parts separately, wrap for protection. Label parts carefully to avoid later mixing of parts.

7. List the three basic types of mannequins.

The three basic types of mannequins are lifelike full mannequins, sculptured or stylized full mannequins, and forms.

8. List at least four types of forms.

Types of forms include shirt forms, torso forms, blouse forms, trunk forms, suit forms, and dress forms.

9. Name the two materials most commonly used to manufacture mannequins today, and the three most commonly used in the past.

Most commonly used materials today are plastic and fiberglass. Three materials commonly used in the past were wax, papier-mache, and plaster.

10. Name the two things a buyer should look for when selecting a mannequin.

A buyer should look for attitude and quality.

11. List four things to look for when judging the quality of a mannequin.

To judge quality, look for realism, natural pose, quality of construction, and durability of finish.

Merchandise Signing

Questions

The answer to each statement is found in this assignment. Write out each statement as it appears, filling in the blank space with the appropriate word or phrase. *Underline* your answer.

1. The top line on a standard sign card is called the _____, or _____.
headline, lead-in line
2. The main head or second line, identifies the specific _____.
product, or item of merchandise
3. The two or three lines underneath the main head give the _____ or _____ of the merchandise.
features, benefits
4. The best typeface for maximum visibility and legibility is called _____.
sans serif
5. A price that is less than the regular price, or indicates a markdown or savings over the normal selling price, is called _____ pricing.
comparative
6. In checking correctness, edit sign copy for _____ and _____.
factual accuracy, spelling, punctuation, correct price, generic names, correct grammar, trade name usage, accurate figures
(any two of these)
7. _____ policies are largely designed to prevent misleading price information.
truth-in-advertising
8. A comparative price that indicates a final reduction or end-of-season closeout of a group of items or one lot can use the term _____.
clearance
9. When the term *regular* is used in comparative pricing, it must refer to the _____ price.
normal, or original selling

10. In fabric terminology, when a weave is used, it must be accompanied by the correct _____ used in that weave.

generic fiber

11. A trade name for a particular fiber must appear alongside the _____ it identifies.

fiber

12. The two most popular sizes of sign cards are _____ and _____.

eighth-sheet and sixteenth-sheet, or 7 × 14 inches and 5½ × 7 inches

13. A quarter-sheet-sized card is most useful on a mass display of _____ merchandise, and it measures _____.

hard goods or big ticket, 11 × 14 inches

14. For institutional and announcement signs, the preferred size is _____ or _____.

half-sheet, full-sheet, or 22 × 14 inches or 22 × 28-inches

15. Most retailers prefer sign cards with a single typeface, printed in _____ ink on _____ card stock for good readability and visibility.

black, white

Projects

1. Write the sign copy for the merchandise described following Project 2. Compose the lead-in, main head, and sales copy. Show these as separate lines on your paper and identify each line.
2. Make a layout of the sign copy you wrote in Project 1. Show the exact size of the sign, the position and size of each line, and the typeface style you select.

Description of merchandise for sign copy:

For the late spring buying season that includes weddings, graduation, vacation, and summer outdoor living, the buyer has made a good purchase on patio table and chair sets. These are made of heavy-gauge steel, primed with rustproof paint, and finished in a glossy white or yellow enamel. The tables are round, 42 inches in diameter, and are made to take an umbrella that can be purchased separately. The four chairs in the set have arms and cross-braced legs. They also have removable cushions with vinyl covers that wash clean with a damp cloth.

The table and four chairs are sold as a set at \$124.95. The normal selling price for merchandise of this quality is \$159.95, if perfect. These sets have very minor imperfections in the weld joints of the seams that in no way mar their strength, durability, or finish.

Using the guidelines for copywriting found in this assignment, compose sign copy for this merchandise.

Note to instructor:

Copy and layout can be original. But it should follow a recommended five-line sequence. The lead-in heading should stress a benefit or a reason to buy now. The head should identify the product. The sales copy should give no more than three main features or benefits from the fact sheet.

The comparable pricing *must* state that the items are not perfect. To omit this fact is a violation of FTC regulations and the "truth-in-advertising" regulations. The comparable pricing may *not* state "regularly." It should say, "if perfect." The imperfections do not have to appear on the sign card.

On the layout, it is recommended that the student use only a single typeface. It should be in caps and lower case with variable type sizes. A sans serif is preferred. But do not grade off for a Roman or serif style. Scripts and calligraphic styles are not permissible because of poor readability. Texts like Old English should absolutely not be used.

Effective Use of Display Properties and Decorations

Projects

1. Select any window or interior display in your training station to observe. Prepare a drawing or sketch of the display, showing the various props and elements in the design. Include the merchandise, since it is the most important element. What are the props? Give a description of each, and tell which type it is. How is each made? What are the materials? Are the props commercially made, produced in-house, or from a collection of props in the display storage area?

How does each prop fit into the overall design or theme of the display? Do you think each achieves its purpose of helping the arrangement and giving interest to the merchandise? What would you add or take away to make an improvement? Tell how the display would be improved with your changes. Prepare a brief report and include the sketch.

2. Select any item of merchandise or group of related items you would use to create either a window or interior display. Design a display and make a drawing or sketch of it. Show which props you would use in addition to the mannequins (if any) and the merchandise.

Remember to keep your design simple and direct. The merchandise is most important, not the props and decoration. You may select props that you already have on hand in your training station. Or you may decide to build one, or obtain one easily and inexpensively.

Be creative, but also be practical. Let your training sponsor criticize your design and make suggestions for improvement before you attach it to this assignment.

Display Planning, Design, and Coordination

Questions

1. Why is your job one of the most important ones in the organization?

To be successful on any job, you must know your job and how to perform it. But, more important, you must also believe that your job is important and what you do really matters. Your job in visual merchandising is one of the most important ones in the store. What you do, or don't get done, really matters.

Customers are going to be attracted, or turned off, by your displays and all other related activities. The customer's decision to buy or not to buy is directly influenced by displays, signing, lighting, and arrangement. Themes are important. The professionalism of your work shows up and everyone sees it.

2. Who has responsibility for planning displays when the display worker is new and inexperienced?

If a display worker is new and inexperienced, the entire display may be planned by the director, complete with sketch, floor plan, layout, signing, lighting, mannequins, and merchandise.

3. How do chain store organizations achieve a look of uniformity with their visual merchandising?

In large chain store organizations, themes, display layouts, signing, and other details are planned in a central location. The desire here is that one retail unit should look very much like another. As an example, you can instantly spot the uniform visual merchandising at a Sears, Ward's, or Penney's retail store. This is purposeful. Most display workers in these organizations carry out the overall seasonal planning of the central office. Signing, fixturing, themes, and POS merchandising achieve a look of uniformity.

4. How does visual merchandising help achieve a distinctive look for an independent store?

Much time and effort is devoted to creating merchandising and displays that achieve a distinctive look. Even within one store, the same merchandising effort is not put into bargain basement merchandising that is put into the designer salon. Display workers must always be aware that their role is to create the distinctive, the unique, the different merchandising look.

5. Name four major sources of creative display ideas.

- (1) Building a category or theme *file* compiled from magazine clippings in all different areas of fashion, furnishings, trade associations, areas of special interest, and art books.

- (2) Observing other store's displays and theme ideas, plus the changing scene of the city and everything that you see every day.
 - (3) Becoming a scavenger, looking for junk, salvage, and discards that can be refinished and used as display props and decoration.
 - (4) Looking for the obvious things that surround you, including art galleries, factories, theatres, public libraries, museums, newspapers, and public buildings.
6. Explain briefly what a *theme* is and how it is used in merchandising.

Most merchandising efforts have a distinct purpose apart from selling merchandise. Every season finds something that is new, exciting, or has caught the public's interest. Merchandising looks for the pulse or throb of human interest and tries to capitalize on it for promoting merchandise.

Whatever it is that stimulates people's interest and attention can become a theme. This theme is the one unifying factor that ties all merchandising efforts together and gives them a purpose. A theme can be an event, a color, a culture, a country, a season, a sale, or any idea that is carried forward through each display, in the fixturing, signing, props, and decorations.

7. How is a promotion coordinated to get maximum results?

Themes and promotional events are not just the responsibility of display workers. Rather, promotion is a coordinated effort. It involves merchandising, selling, advertising, display, public relations, and other coordination personnel. Plans are made together, and each department carries its assignment and responsibilities along with other departments. This gives harmony and cohesiveness to the entire effort. Every employee and department knows what is going on and works in a united effort.

Projects

(Select any one)

1. The promotional event is entitled "Carefree Feeling." It is storewide in scope, covering every merchandise department. The theme is hot-air balloons, both old-fashioned and modern. The idea is to "get that carefree feeling" with _____. Each department can use a subtheme that ties in, such as "get up and get away," "light on your feet," "get a lift with—," "the sky is the limit," "lighten your day," and so on.
Your job is to design a display for any kind of merchandise that you select. Sketch a simple plan, showing the subtheme, the art, props, and decorations, along with the merchandise, accessories if any, fixtures, and appropriate signing. Assume that you have the responsibility of designing your own display. The sketch is for final approval of the display director.
2. Assume that you have the responsibility of setting up a display at a county fair that has a western or "country" theme. Your booth is 10 feet deep and 20 feet wide. Draw a floor plan sketch showing the arrangement of merchandise (any

merchandise of your choosing), props, decorations, and signing. Be sure to show the store name and logo because you will be competing with other stores and merchandise for attention. Let your imagination flow freely. Be innovative and original. Try looking through magazines and books for ideas.

3. Originate a theme of your own for any kind of merchandise or for a storewide promotional event. Look for ideas in other stores or from an outside source. Choose some local civic event or one of national or worldwide significance. Or use a season, a holiday, of any theme that comes to mind. Be original. Don't copy something that's already been done. Here are some ideas to stimulate your imagination:

- Imported merchandise from Canada or Mexico
- Cruise around the world; fly around the world
- Fiftieth anniversary sales (gold)
- Open season on deer
- Fourth of July
- Football kickoff to fall fashions
- Ski time or winter playland

After you have decided on the promotional event, come up with the exact wording. Suggest displays for at least three different kinds of merchandise. Include the signing and suggestions for props and decorations, if any. Assume that you are the visual merchandising director, and this is the plan you want carried out by the display department.

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Answer Book/Teacher's Guide (DE 333 A)

Manuals and Answer Books in the Previous Series

For occupations in appliance marketing, automotive and accessories marketing, business and personal services, convenience store operations, financial services marketing, food marketing, food service marketing, furniture marketing, shoe sales marketing, hardware selling, home and office products marketing, industrial marketing, jewelry and gift store marketing, wholesale marketing, specialty marketing, home entertainment equipment marketing, service station marketing, and travel services marketing.

Of Special Interest

Mathematics: Essential to Marketing. The 34 assignments in the Student's Manual (DE 116 S) cover math from addition and subtraction through ratios and equations used by management to judge success of a business. A Teacher's Guide (DE 116 C) includes practice problems to be copied, answers, and other features.

DE 821 A

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